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THE INNER LIGHT

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THE INNER LIGHT

A Study of the Significance, Character, and Primary Content of the Religious Consciousness

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WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

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London
SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO. LIM.
25 HIGH STREET, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.
1908

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PREFACE

THIS treatise is an attempt to express the results at which its author has arrived through that intellectual re-birth which is a necessity for all who feel themselves thrown back perforce upon first principles. Each must pass through this for himself; yet the conclusions of one may help another. Study has of course been indispensable, but it is absolutely impossible to state the degree of my specific indebtedness to particular writers. Whenever definitely conscious of it, I think I have given some indication. But in working out my position I have been conscious rather of a logical unfolding from within than of the incorporation of theories from without. The general position to which I have worked my way, such as it is, is my own, and has not, so far as I am aware, been reached by anyone else.

As to particular positions, I have noticed a great deal of independent coincidence between myself and other writers—allowing for the different setting of their ideas and mine—in what I have read since writing these pages. Convinced yet diffident, I greatly value this support.

It seems well to give this hint as to the genesis of the work, if only in order to be able to ask the reader to

consider it primarily as a whole, and to read the particular arguments as elements in a synthesis. Of course its contents will always remain mere speculation to many, and to none the vital expression of unitary spiritual experience which they are to its author: but still what I have just said may help to show how it may be best understood and most fairly estimated.

I conclude with my hearty thanks to Professor Caldecott for his valued scrutiny of my work and for his suggestions; and especially for his introduction of this my first book to the public.

July, 1908 A. R. W.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THERE are two marks of the religious faith of our day which are of the highest importance: in religion, men are taking their stand at the centre of their experience and working out from there; and when so working forward they are careful to allow proper place and value for the whole concreteness and richness of their nature. It is becoming recognised that we are not living really religiously so long as we remain in the outer areas of our life, and also that however rightly we start from the centre we shall be partial or defective unless our onward course is comprehensive of every phase of personal character. A man who endeavours to identify his religion with his moral life has started wrong: and a man who begins with central experience but in his development lacks clear and strenuous morality, or is indifferent to the claims of reason, is really faithless to his faith. The offers made to us to substitute morality and social reform for religion are futile on the one hand; while the invitations to anything like Hindu mysticism are to be repudiated on the other.

The philosophy of religion to-day is recognising these marks of religion more widely than was the case a generation ago, and is acknowledging their primary importance.

It is aware that the increased knowledge of the extent and variety of the ramifications of religion in the history of a race gives confirmatory evidence for the fact of religious experience and material for study of the experience as it takes different forms. But it is also aware that all demonstrations of the utility of religion in the moral and social sphere of life do but exhibit religion at work, and not disclose the thing itself, and that this is true also of the assistance which religious faith gives to our endeavour to see rationality in the scheme of the universe. And it therefore sets as its problems, What fundamentally is the soul of man? and, What is it for a soul to be truly in communion with God?

It may be said that for the general philosophy of religion this amounts to a rediscovery both of the soul and of God. We had long been occupied with the study of religion in the outer areas covered by the physical sciences so greatly expanded of late: it was a chief inquiry whether or not in these new areas the teleological argument still availed to show us *vestigia Dei*, and alternations of defeat and success attended the inquiry. We had been engaged also in investigating the nearer areas of the conscious life of mankind, both individual and social, which the progressive sciences of psychology and sociology and the extended range of historical study opened out to us; and there too we inquired whether there were more or fewer signs which justified religious faith in men as spiritual beings and in a supreme spiritual Author and Ruler. But now the attention is again

directed to what takes place in the innermost area of experience: we ask men to tell us what answer they give to themselves when each asks, "What am I myself, in essence, and in the simplicity of soul which underlies the experiences and manifestations of the outer ranges of my life? And in this inner area of spiritual experience do I find or do I not find myself in communion with One to whom I assign the holy name of God?"

This resort to the centre had been discouraged for our fathers and even for those of us whose reflective life goes back for thirty or forty years. We were told that the endeavour to penetrate through the outer areas of our life and to look for the soul as a "substance" was not possible since Kant had taught philosophy to regard "substance" as a scholastic fiction. Men thought it incumbent on themselves to acquiesce in the reduction even of the soul to the status of a mere phenomenon among phenomena: some in serious scepticism, others in lighter agnosticism, went their way without religion; others transferred to moral and social life the phrases of religion; and still others, keeping fast hold on religion, deemed it obligatory to dispense with all attempt at philosophical justification of their faith. Mill, Huxley, Matthew Arnold, and Mansel may be taken as representations of these courses, and each of these was spokesman for vast numbers of his contemporaries. In the Christian Churches the interest in philosophy naturally paled, and Christian men and women pursued their way simply referring to the purely

historical Gospel, or to Gospel and Church combined, as the only source of their religious faith.

But now from the seats of philosophical and theological teaching came vindications of the view that each man properly looks for religion in the innermost area, where his experience is unitary and central. Each man is a soul, not has one: and he expresses his being in his activity, his thinking, and his feeling. Such is the depth of his nature that in the greatest possible expansion of his expression he is still but partially manifested. Behind the rich variety of even a Shakspeare or a Goethe there was an unmeasured personality still unexpressed. All that psychology can do is to take into account so much of personality as finds manifestation in different men. But no science can penetrate into the inner self, for no man can know another's mind: we cannot cross to one another's standpoint for vision of the world; still less, if possible, for the origination of activity or the experience of feeling. And therefore it is wholly out of place to overbear any man's inner experience by weight of information derived from the accumulated observations of the manifestations of what men in general have been able to tell. I must seek myself within myself; and what knowledge I find there no man can take from me. Then, when I move forward, so to speak, I at once find a "world" which is not due to me, and my actions upon it are affected by what it is and can do; and my actions become largely reactions induced by the necessity of adapting myself to it and responding to it. Still, all the while I

remain myself: in these actions and reactions I pass from potentiality into activity. With these activities a current of feeling runs which is of the greatest moment to me, and strictly to me alone. For this thoroughgoing acknowledgment of the inner self manifested in its life we may use the term *Personality*, and the conception which it designates now predominates over the field of Philosophy generally, and of Philosophy of Religion in particular. In Personality in this deep sense are rooted all the beliefs entitled to be considered religious: besides the soul or spiritual Personality itself we have our faith in the community of spiritual persons, and the sense of the presence and revelation of the Divine Spirit in personal relation with our spirit. Not everyone that finds Personality in man finds also a Divine Personality, it is true: in many souls there is hesitation, doubt, even denial. On the other hand there are some to whom the Divine Personality is more clear than their own souls, and others to whom the spiritual community is the ultimate object of faith. Whether we should consider that anyone who fails to find all the three forms of transcendent being must be considered not to have "found religion" is perhaps a question of terms. But those who declare that to them all three are present in experience can scarcely do other than regard as deficient a consciousness marked by the absence of any one of these Ideas of Rational Faith.

But the predominance of Personalism in the philosophy of religion is only one sign of the change that

has come over English thought. Another is to be seen in more specially religious circles: the revival of Mysticism more or less avowed is a striking feature in religious literature, both theological and popular. For what Mysticism is taken to mean is just this appeal within the manifested appearances to an inner area of experience, an area marked by intuitiveness and immediacy and primariness, the signs that it is at the centre that faith and knowledge are seated. Such Mysticism—though not all who are really occupying this position care to accept the term—is to be distinguished emphatically from the pseudo-mysticism which resorts to extraordinary physical or mental phenomena as "religious," and confuses them with the experiences of the inner realm of spirit. None can resent this confused and often repulsive distortion more earnestly than those who must regard it as a pretender and an intruder. And Mysticism is also to be distinguished from a pseudo-mysticism, more to be respected, yet perhaps all the more dangerous, which would draw the whole area of experience into the inner area and leave the soul in incommunicable silence so far as its fellows are concerned, and if still finding God yet tending to identify the soul with Him, and so to lose individuality, and terminate "experience" altogether.

Setting aside these aberrations, the fact which invites attention is the extent to which Mysticism has become the spirit of the age, the *Zeitgeist*, for religious people. In pulpits it is the resonant note. In literature it is

evident in the copious issue of books for general reading —sometimes new, sometimes reprints of masterpieces or of selections from the long-neglected mystical writers of the past. This amounts to a rediscovery of the soul, and for not a few it is the first true, vital perception of the spirituality of God Himself.

Yet it must not be supposed by those who have not opportunity to inform themselves that all the serious minds which reflect upon religion have agreed to take this central standpoint. In the outer circles many voices still claim sufficiency for partial or external forms of religious experience and oppose the tendency which prevails. There are still some Rationalists, a small but determined band, who continue to stake religion upon the success of our speculative reflection—insisting that Reason is an essence within the essence, and that without it a man's religion is neither ultimate nor secure. There are the Pragmatists who see that the assertion of self in acts of will is the primary feature of the outer life, but for whom will is itself really a force of a measurable and relative kind issuing only in what may be called tangible and sensible influence upon a tangible and sensible world. These are dangerous because they point men towards a self: but it is a self of the "phenomenal" kind, by no means capable of being the kind of centre which is meant by those who have discerned the nature of spiritual personality. And there are those who look at everything from the point of view of the community, who declare that the real religion is in its essence social,

and that it is not until we participate in social life that religion can begin. There is a truth in this, if "social" is rightly defined so as to safeguard the spirituality of the members, but it is only remaining in an outer area if all that is meant is a social life which is not the expression of inner spirituality. A campaign of good works measurable in extent and transitory in nature is an outcome of religion, a necessary outcome indeed, but it is not religion itself.

And there are still those who ground their faith outside themselves in historical events and in the manifestations of other religious minds. These cannot find their own souls; they are *in vacuo* until they have found other souls to which to cling. For them God must have spoken first to some other soul, or disclosed Himself in some outward sphere, and they must go out of themselves in order to find Him. These are they whose faith is not only awakened and enlarged by the events of an historical revelation—which is true for all of us—but is constituted by it: they lack the native creativeness of religious faith; for them Christ is, strictly speaking, the man Jesus of Nazareth, for they have not found in their souls that the Christ whom Jesus was is Eternal. They do not realise their inherent sonship of God, even when Christ and the Gospel present it to them. But the secret of the Lord is with them who find their own souls and meet God there. Their faith is mediated by the way in which they have come towards it, but in itself it is a faith which is immediately and personally responsive

to the very presence of God. And it presses them forth into a fellowship of life and thought and feeling with men of like faith, heirs of the transcendent kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus, in whom the sonship is complete.

To the soul which has attained the centre of faith these outer areas belong as much as they do to those who claim the outer areas—one or other of them—as the only sphere of religious experience. The spiritual personality proceeds from its central faith and expands over all the lines of experience. It goes out along them and it returns back to itself enriched and developed. We cannot fix ourselves away from the spiritual centre though we must not rest in it. We must live along all the lines of expansion, and consolidate the whole experience of human nature into one single whole. And it is by men with spiritual faith so central and so comprehensive that the spiritual kingdom of God is constituted, and religion established in an assurance which cannot be shaken.

In what I have here said I must by no means commit the writer of this volume to any statement or position; nor must I be taken to endorse all that he has written. I may not do more than offer an introduction to the standpoint which he takes. The volume itself consists of an exposition of what the writer finds in the religious consciousness, together with a comparison of what he finds with what others have offered or are offering. The reader will find in it a very careful scrutiny into what religious faith has to say. There is first and foremost

a vindication of the centrality and immediacy of faith; and then there is an exposition of its expression in thought and life. That rationality is not ignored or set aside, but included, is natural in one who is of the name and near kindred of a leader of Oxford philosophy and theology two generations ago: it has recognition for what recent Pragmatism is aiming at, whilst warning against the undue extension of its principle; it vindicates the reference to the community: and it estimates the value of the features of historical revelation—especially, of course, of the Christian revelation, in dealing with which the writer takes into account the consciousness of sin in man and the Redeeming character of God.

I do not say that what is here given is all new and can be found nowhere else; but I commend it as a record of what has been thought out afresh: every reader will, I think, feel as he follows the writer that he is in contact with a mind at work. And the writing is, in my judgment, of a definiteness which is remarkable considering that the subject-matter is always elastic and often impalpable: only severe training and continuous application can have secured so firm a tread.

It may be of interest to note that the original of this study, the work of a Cambridge graduate, formed the credential for the granting for the first time of the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of London. Somewhat enlarged and revised since its presentation, we may take it as inaugurating what it is to be hoped will prove a long line of studies in theology in the newer Universities of England.

A. C.

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THE INNER LIGHT

CHAPTER I

CURRENT THEORIES OF THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND OTHER KNOWLEDGE

§ 1. *Main Purport of this Treatise*

THE primary aim of this treatise is to press the claim of the spiritual mind to know God for itself. It is inspired by a strong feeling that all religious philosophies which seek other subjective grounds for faith than that claimed in the New Testament—the witness of the Spirit of God in the spirit of man—utterly fail to recognise, and must finally fail to satisfy, the central needs of the human soul. Where this ground is accepted, the essential truth is found, whatever difficulty there may be in doing justice to the other aspects of knowledge and of human nature. And yet these must receive their due, not only for their own sake, but supremely for the sake of the spiritual mind itself, which cannot hold a secure position, or find its proper scope, so long as it is confined to a fenced-off department liable to incursions from without, and is forbidden to make

good its claim to a unifying supremacy over the whole man.

The dangers of reliance on our own spiritual insight, or alleged private revelations, are so exceedingly obvious, that even devout believers miss the full significance of the "Inner Light," in their fear of fanaticism. But this failure to perceive the real principle of our own spiritual knowledge, although it cannot deprive us of the knowledge, is a terrible weakness in view of the doubts and difficulties that assail us. The following pages, then, are an endeavour to assist in liberating the inhibited self-consciousness of the spiritual man. And the effort to do this will necessarily bring to light principles of ontological significance, which may help to vindicate some of the content of our religious consciousness at the tribunal of philosophy.

§ 2. *Rejected Theories.* (1) *Separation of Faith from Philosophy*

To begin with, it may be desirable to glance at three general tendencies of thought which, while accepting the validity of religious belief as such, fail to allow it a position of essential independence, unless at the cost of isolation and impoverishment, and that without any real security after all.

First, we are met by a conception, or habit of thought, which tends to separate religion from philosophy, and to play off pure faith against all doctrines which seem to commit their adherents to any special metaphysical

or historical beliefs. Thus a position of apparent security is found for faith, and for philosophy and criticism a fair field. Now this motive is an excellent one, but whether the end can be fairly reached by assigning to religious thought a relatively isolated department, is another question. The obvious reply that has been made by the critics of Ritschlianism is that philosophy cannot be excluded from theology, because the effort to do so takes us into the sphere of philosophy, and thus the result when reached rests on a speculative basis. It would seem that this is unanswerable, except by a quite unwarrantable severance between the theory of knowledge and the theory of being. For it is surely an inadmissible proposition that whereas the ground and nature of religious belief must be set by philosophy in proper relation to knowledge in general, yet the content of that belief must not be discussed in philosophical terms and related to ontological ideas.

This severance can only be plausibly maintained if the religious belief is confined to very few and simple propositions. But, as a matter of fact, such a creed as that of Harnack,[1] for instance, is utterly unsatisfying to countless numbers, if not to the bulk, of religious-minded persons. And faith actually has committed itself to

[1] "Eternal life *in the midst of* time, by the strength and under the eyes of God" ("What is Christianity?" p. 8). This raises the question: What is eternal life? In the light of the work as a whole, the narrow significance of the phrase cannot escape notice. This appears (1) in the negative implications of the words here italicised; (2) in the latter part of the sentence, which externalises part of the ordinary connotation of the phrase.

views of reality as such, and of God in more than His direct relation to the immediate needs of the soul. Now this is a fact which, being antecedent to the particular theories, must be taken as significant of the very nature of faith itself. The intermingling of philosophy with theology is a historical fact, and took place very early. How shall we regard that fact? It is easy enough to stigmatise the historical creed as the result of an intrusion of Hellenism into the sanctuary of spiritual life; but certainly the speculative mind could never have entered into partnership with the spiritual, had the advance been made only from its own side. Religious belief was of course largely corrupted by contact with the wisdom of this world; but how could this ever have happened, had not belief, of its own inherent impulse, prior to its corruption, sought to establish its claims in terms of the highest speculative thought? The deadening of spiritual instincts can never account for the emergence of formulated creeds, heretical or orthodox. For, at the least, philosophy has afforded material which faith has used, and this would have been impossible if there were any essential severance between the two. In that case no materialising of a spiritual Church, no sophistication of a simple gospel, could ever have taken place. The spiritual principle, however weak, would have kept itself distinct. There might have arisen, perhaps, a counter-church, purely Hellenic and radically philosophical, using spiritual phenomena for its own purposes, but starting from a distinct centre, and quite unable to ally itself,

much less to blend, with the original community of the faithful.

And add to this that the spiritual Church, by the necessary admission of all who endeavour to go back to its primitive message, has held some specific truths; it has not merely felt, but believed; not merely exhorted, but taught. These truths, even when reduced to their narrowest compass, touched philosophy on one side, none the less because they touched life and character on the other. Men arose, as they could not but have arisen, who questioned and theorised about these truths; and the Church had to choose whether to accept the new theories,[1] to oppose them, or to ignore, if not suppress them *in limine*, as an unwarrantable tampering with the sacred tradition. This last course, if persisted in, would have defeated its own object: for, by refusing to pronounce upon the intrinsic value of unauthorised interpretations, the Church would have left the new teachers free to claim the utmost importance for what they taught, and have deprived itself of the power to disown them as interpreters of the common faith: and of course the question of religious authority is itself theological, and when raised must sooner or later throw open the whole field of doctrinal controversy. Then, on the other hand, as has been often pointed out, the belief of the Church had to assume philosophic form if it was to oppose the incursion of philosophic heresy. The very fact that the two streams could conflict proves that they did not belong to different planes. In short, it is quite

hopeless to allow a minimum of creed, and then to draw a sharp line between that minimum and the realm of ideas that besets it on every side. That faith should define its own attitude towards reality as such, is as much a characteristic tendency of faith, as the endeavour to explain religious experience is inevitable to philosophy.

§ 3. (2) *Rationalism. Its Meaning*

We pass now to a conception of religious belief which, though it may ally itself with similar views within theology itself, is philosophically the opposite of that which has been considered. The word "Rationalism" (or "Idealism," in the epistemological sense) may be applied to it, simply as indicating that view of knowledge, and therefore of religious knowledge, which makes reason, or the logical understanding, supreme, not merely over authority, but over experience. This does not mean that experience is to be ignored; it must of course be accepted as an essential element in knowledge, but that its place is subsidiary, and that in the last resort knowledge must be defined in terms of the Idea. Experience supplies what we may call raw material; but not complete objects of knowledge, until reason has worked upon the material. Rationalism, within the sphere of religious belief, would also include all reliance upon proofs of the existence of God as the ultimate ground of belief, with whatever theory of knowledge in general this reliance might be associated.

§ 4. *Rationalism as a Theory of Knowledge. Reason and Experience*

It is charged against Rationalism that it ignores the emotional and æsthetic sides of our nature. In so far, however, as it is a protest against loose language about feeling, as *per se* the basis of knowledge, it fulfils an important office. It is just also in its protest against equally vague language used about faith, as though faith could in some sense replace or supplement reason on reason's own ground: whereas it should be obvious that these two factors must not be arbitrarily partitioned but correlated.

The objection here taken to Rationalism is taken not primarily in the interest of the emotional life, certainly not of mere authority, but of cognitive experience.[1] At present, however, positive exposition is, as far as possible, reserved.

Before discussing religious Rationalism, it seems desirable to say a few words on the general relation of reason to experience. They are offered with a due sense of the greatness of the subject, and merely because a preliminary glance at the wider field may help us to get a satisfactory grasp of the questions that lie before us.

Now the place which experience occupies in the

[1] Rationalism sometimes gives great prominence to experience, but in an ontological sense, as the "stuff" of Reality. This is, of course, very different from the use here made of it.

Rationalistic, or Idealistic, theory of knowledge, seems to be fairly expressed in the following passage, written though it is with specific reference to Hegel:—"Experience," says Dr M'Taggart, "is only necessary to the movement of the idea because it is necessary to its existence. It is not itself a principle of change, which may as fairly be said to be independent, as the changes in the pictures of a magic lantern may be ascribed exclusively to the camera, and not at all to the canvas on which they are reflected, although without the canvas, the pictures themselves, and therefore the transition from one to another of them, would be impossible." [1]

The point that it concerns us to maintain is that experience, however dependent upon reason, does not thus remain a constant element; but that the development of knowledge is an unfolding of experience. It has come to be recognised, perhaps, more generally that experience cannot be regarded as the mere raw material which reason transforms into knowledge. Mere sensations would not lend themselves for this purpose: if we are to combine them into a rational system they must be already items of knowledge. Even simple apprehension is a fact of consciousness. It is urged that we cannot know the simplest object except in and through its relations, the discovery of which is of course the work of reason. To this it has been fairly replied that still the thing *is* not its relations. To fall back on some compromise between bare non-cognitive sensation, as

[1] "Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic," p. 19.

the material of thought, and an already rational object —such as a vague "awareness" or blur of feeling— does not appear to meet the needs of the case. For consciousness even in this vague form must have an object; and since this object is antecedent to the logical process, to allow it at all is to surrender the cardinal doctrine of this school, the indissoluble oneness of thought and being. It is difficult to understand how, if there is any sort of object antecedent to reason, we can escape going the whole way and admitting that reason *as such* requires a rational subject-matter; in other words, that the relation of reason to experience is not that of form to matter, but that the two co-exist as the principles of activity and receptivity respectively, throughout the whole conscious life. The fundamental Kantian doctrine that the object must conform to the subject, and that the mind itself supplies the categories which unite its data into a coherent whole, still leaves the fact that the very meaning of the original data unfolds as we advance in understanding of the rational system to which it belongs.

When we come to think of it, our sensations are not, as such, objects at all, except for introspection. They are facts about self. I may speak of having a sensation of red as I look at a pillar-box: red is an affection of my subjectivity. Yet as such it contributes nothing to the knowledge of an external world. If it appears to do so that is only because, even when we think of it as an affection, we cannot abstract from its external associa-

tions. When it comes to me as significant of a red pillar-box, or even of some object which I cannot distinguish, it is *as* a quality of that object that it appears; therefore it cannot be antecedent to all perception of the existent which it qualifies. Our cognition, then, does not proceed from sensations to concrete objects. The correlative of perception is the qualified existent: qualified, for without content it is obviously nothing; yet not the sum of its qualities, for the reason that they *are* qualities, and are given as such. The vaguest red blur is yet an object. For what does a blur import? Subjectively, indistinctness of perception. But this means a definite object indefinitely perceived. Objectively, the blur vaguely suggests disorder and fortuity. But this presupposes that the object belongs to an external world the general order of which sets off its own irrelevance. If again, by a strenuous effort, we abstract, as far as it is possible to do so, from even the most chaotic suggestion of an object to which the redness belongs, it passes over entirely to the subject side, and has no cognitive significance except that of an event in our own personal psychic history. Consciousness and sensibility are, then, distinct moments of an identical perception. There is no raw material of sensibility. The relatively inarticulate data which enter as material for our intellectual processes, serve as such by virtue of such articulation as they already possess. The confusion of bare "matter" with material is as fatal here as in cosmic speculation. Nor is the material psychic;

for no schematising can produce out of sensation that individuality which is the essence of an object.

This failure to understand the relation of perception to affection seems the great crucial error which Kant inherited from Berkeley and Hume. Maintaining the position just defined, as against his, we must reject his conception of experience as merely sensible. It is impossible to hold that the primary data of knowledge are objects of cognitive experience, and yet that this experiential element remains a constant quantity, and does not enter into the rational system as such. For knowledge, or belief, is more than assent to the validity of logical processes. The logical process presents us with a new, or transformed, object, which imprints on our minds a more or less clear impression of its truth. This impression is an integral element in the concept; because it depends on the position occupied by the concept in the general content of the mind, and that position is determined certainly on the one hand by logic, but on the other by the actual matter of the concept in itself.

If to know the thing is to know its relations, then to know the relations is to know the thing—that is to say, the original thought-material which thought presupposes, develops from within under the reasoning process. These two complementary truths: that the particular object of knowledge is not merely a centre of relations, and, on the other hand, that, when we abstract from them it disappears: seems to lay the basis of a theory of knowledge sharply distinguished from Sensationalism on the

one hand and from Rationalism, as above defined, on the other. As against both theories, we are led to trace the implication of unity and system in our experience as such.

It would seem, then, impossible to regard experience as a mere constant element in all knowledge, a mere sensational basis, having no cognitive content in itself, or as supplying only the elementary facts upon which reason does its work. Thought in itself is a process: it is only formally constructive: it simply raises us to higher levels of perception.

§ 5. *The Implication of a Principle of Totality in Experience as such*

It may be well to add a word with reference to the special difficulty which obscures the experiential element in knowledge, and hinders us from doing justice to it; though that difficulty is met in our constructive discussions which are to follow. We appear, in the process of reasoning, to recede from sense data, and, as a matter of fact, to form our conclusions not from mere impressions, but according to a standard of logical validity. So the Idea becomes, to our reflection, more prominent in its aspect as a product of the mind than in its aspect as an experience. How then can it be shown that, when we reflect, we are not travelling away from experience, or, let us say, building high above it? Is the possibility of error consistent with the immediacy of perception; and

if it be said rather that there is an element of immediacy in all knowledge, is not this practically a contradiction? If knowledge has any element of immediacy, how can we not lay our finger upon that particular fact or object which is immediately known? If thought and experience are so implicated together that we cannot separate out the elements of knowledge that belong to pure experience, is this not to say that knowledge is not immediate, but mediated by thought? On this point a word may be said in anticipation of a fuller discussion later on. What has been said already includes a denial that experience is essentially fragmentary. We perceive wholes, which are never the mere aggregates of their parts, and yet are perceived as wholes, and not as mere undifferentiated units. Now why are we apt to regard this aspect of unity in our perceptions as less fundamental than the plurality; or else, with the Idealists, to save the coherence of the universe by grounding it in hypostatised logic? Of course because sense perception is a definite point of departure. On that side knowledge is precisely and finally bounded; but on the side of unity we seem to have nothing better than abstract universals, culminating—and that only by a metaphysical effort—in an "absolute" which *qua* unitary is completely colourless. But now supposing there be, latent at least in every man, a direct consciousness or intuition of a concrete and all-embracing Being, which is at once so one with the multiplicity as to be the principle of wholeness in which the multiplicity inheres, and yet so distinct from it as to

be in itself a direct object of perception by some central "faculty" of the soul. In that case the aspect of immediacy in all knowledge will at once appear, when the world of ordinary experience and that of the spiritual man are drawn together in the unity of each spiritual personality. By exchanging the glorified arch-universal of merely philosophic religion for the ideal yet actual object of the highest spiritual perception, we have at least avoided the dilemma of Sensationalism and Rationalism, without any mere compromise between the two. This is all that need be claimed at present. It is hoped that in the succeeding pages some indication will be given of the resources of this higher, or absolute, Experientialism, for the understanding of knowledge and reality. It will be then necessary to show that the higher consciousness is not the mere goal of a process of reasoning, not an emotional state fenced off from the reflective life, but a starting-point for the intellect and a permanent standing-ground for the whole personality.

Experience then, is not essentially fragmentary. Reason is not a principle on which experiences are harmonised *ab extra*. Rationality, order, system, are themselves experienced — that is to say, we are directly conscious not merely of atoms, but of complex wholes.

§ 6. *Rationalism and Religion. No Justice done to Feeling or concrete Personality*

The further import of this conclusion will be unfolded later on; and some attempt will be made to do justice to the truth contained in the philosophical doctrine from which the writer of these pages has tried to justify his divergence. But now let us consider briefly the claim of Rationalism to supply a basis for religion. It is, in the sphere of religion, logically a denial of the validity of spiritual intuition as such. Rationalism may lead us to the very threshold of a God-consciousness, but there it stops short, or it is transformed into Mysticism. It cannot claim to know God, but only to know about God. Religious feeling may be sanctioned, but merely as feeling, as an allowable and healthy, nay a necessary, element in the religious life: but there is no *inward* adjustment of the respective claims of philosophy and spiritual insight: religion falls apart into cold speculation on the one hand, and on the other into a hollow play of the imagination, a spiritual life denied its inherent craving to see with its own eyes and live upon its own discoveries. And so it comes to pass that the more important and comprehensive the theory of religion becomes, the more it divorces itself from the spiritual experiences of mankind. If a man desires to be thoroughly intelligent in his religion, he is not allowed directly to adjust the contents of his spiritual consciousness with those of the

community: he must lay a new foundation: he can henceforth only know in the sense of assenting to inferences: if he seems to arrive, now and then, at a resting-place where he can catch a direct glimpse of a higher world and feel the actual touch of the unseen, he must pass on: he must remember that these feelings are merely feelings, and have no value for knowledge, except as stimulating or suggesting further thought. There is no spiritual knowledge: there is only a philosophy of religion. And here the anti-social character of religious Rationalism appears. For the more elaborate and comprehensive its theories become, the more are they the private property of the individual; and the more they mean to him, the more he is cut off from the religious life of the community. For he is united to it by common ethical and spiritual instincts which are superseded as such by his philosophy. If they really determine his philosophy, then it is warped by them; or, if they have a right to determine it, the Rationalistic theory of knowledge is not the true one. The theologian of this school, though he may include all religious life in his survey, yet has his feet planted upon the philosophic ground. The only resting-place he can offer is that of mere intellectual attainment: the inner self which feels and aspires has no real goal; because a goal, or even a resting-place on the road, must be some kind of feeling; and feeling, for the Rationalist, is but an interlude. The intellect, on the other hand, is by its nature ever active: and though it may discover truths which allay the dis-

quietude of search, yet so long as it gives mere ideas—and more it cannot give—it cannot bring us into essential relation with concrete spiritual reality, and the weary march must go on and on. Will may be conjoined with intellect, as it is in some systems: it may be made more fundamental: but this rather accentuates than mitigates the need. We may speak of mind or will being satisfied; but this is inexact language: it is the *person* who is satisfied. Even the most relative satisfaction has no real place in such systems. What—to some of us—could be more dreary than this endless ascent to higher and higher planes, each plane only a stage on the way to the one above; this continual triumphing merely that we may further triumph; this achievement with nothing to achieve; this aspiring to the unattainable; this endless sowing to the wind and reaping of the whirlwind?

The failure to recognise feeling, or rather to recognise the inner self that feels and knows in one, makes it necessary to place the goal in eternity; and eternity is conceived as the region of static perfection. Our ideals *are* already attained—even while we pursue them—in eternity. The goal runs parallel with the race-course: that is to say, the ideal *sub specie æternitatis* is actual, and so does not need to be attained, and *sub specie temporis* is unattainable. All this comes from the apotheosis of the idea. Later on, I hope to give reasons for disallowing any system that starts with ideas, or any abstraction from the unity of the person. But here we are only concerned with epistemology. It does seem

to me impossible to construct a system of any final religious and moral import upon an intellectualist basis; because, without experience, which is the unity of knowledge and feeling, taken as both the basis and the goal of the reasoning process, the process is suspended in the air, and the religious mind has to live upon its own vitals.

These few remarks are meant to apply, of course, not to writers as such, but to the logic of the system. While heartily recognising the high instincts and aims of writers of this class, it is impossible not to feel that they can only escape the fatal limitations of their basis by the help of noble inconsistencies. They may build high and solidly; they may incorporate very much into the structure; but it seems to me that it is built upon a split foundation, and that the fallacy of intellectualism mars it from start to finish.

§ 7. (3) *Pragmatism. Its Meaning*

But now we pass on to consider another general attitude to religion, likewise often favourable in intent, yet which, though resting on a philosophy very much opposed to Rationalism, misses in a curiously similar manner the real inwardness of the religious mind. It is the attitude adopted by a school that is all in arms against the exclusive claims made for reason, and demands an equal recognition for the whole æsthetic, moral, and religious being of man. It renounces the search for an absolute,

and adopts a method of "radical empiricism," [1] carried even into the domain of metaphysics. Its leading principle is the essential purposiveness of thought. There are no abstract first principles, no axioms to be held true antecedently to any use that can be made of them towards solving the problems of thought, and ultimately of life. When we say that a hypothesis is true, we mean, not that finally it is axiomatic, but that within its scope it brings satisfaction; it crowns with success the particular investigation which has brought it to light. And so every truth is at bottom a postulate, —that is to say, it is true relatively to the particular experiences which have suggested it, and to which it gives intellectual coherence. This is so even with regard to mathematics: the truths of mathematics are simply abstractions from concrete experience, and it is simply with reference to that experience that they possess validity. And since satisfaction is the very criterion of truth, truth as such takes a place subordinate to all that needs satisfying in our complex nature.

The application of this principle to religion follows readily. The beliefs, say, in God and immortality, vindicate themselves as hypotheses that will work. Retrospectively, they sum up into a coherent whole a large mass of otherwise fragmentary and discordant experiences: prospectively, they lay the foundation for

[1] Prof. James has since declared that Pragmatism is a method only ("Pragmatism," p. 5). But the method rests on a theory of Truth; and that cannot be isolated from philosophy in general.

harmony of spirit and a life of beneficent and ordered activity. But religion so regarded rests on a merely empirical foundation: empirical, not in the sense that it is given us in direct experience, but in the sense that, by experience of its results, we assign to it that measure of probability, perhaps a very large measure, which is due to a working hypothesis that works well.

§ 8. *The Pragmatic Theory of Truth*

With regard to this line of philosophical thought, considered for the moment apart from its religious import, it may be well to hazard a few remarks. Later on it may appear that a larger element of truth in it is recognised that can be indicated at present. Now it is clear at the outset that truth is not a partly plastic material in our hands; the aspect of necessity, of stubborn objectivity, must be taken into fuller account. And it appears that this aspect cannot be viewed from the standpoint of purpose; that it is fundamental, belonging to the very definition of truth. Surely this follows from the simple fact that we cannot think of purpose without presupposing cognition: purpose, at the last analysis, must imply a knowledge both of the ideal and of the means. If thought is essentially purposive, purpose is essentially intelligent. Thought, says the modern Pragmatist (to use the term in vogue), is selective: it chooses such ideas as help it to work out its life-problems. But then, as a critic of this theory has recently pointed

out, thought cannot be regarded as making selection from a mere chaos, but only from a rational field: it chooses among ideas, but whence have the ideas come? If thought always implies antecedent purpose, so purpose implies antecedent knowledge. Truth, then, however close its association with the will, has also a final aspect of necessity; its objectivity and determinateness are not merely the limitation, but the ground, of thought.

Ideas, then, may be plastic—as they are—but not *qua* truths. If we allow ourselves to make propositions about truth or reality, we are handling concepts which, being presupposed in all thought-processes, must possess a character antecedent to the mutations and adaptations which may be traced within these processes. The absolute character of the basal dogma of Pragmatism contradicts its contents. Had not Pragmatism, therefore better let first principles alone? Yet, if so, where is its warrant when it comes forward as a philosophy? The test of "satisfaction" can surely not serve as its own foundation.

"True ideas," says Professor James, "are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify."[1] That we may not virtually include in the definition the term to be defined, to be verified means simply to *work*. An idea is true if it works. But belief in an idea certainly means more than the knowledge that the idea *has* worked: it involves the expectation that it *will*: otherwise we could not take a step forward in thought: and

[1] "Pragmatism," p. 201.

this expectation is not instinctive, but rests on a judgment. Practicality in the thought-processes before us is the hall-mark of the true idea. But if our belief that the idea is true *means* belief that it is practical, what do we mean when we say that this latter belief is true? We cannot say that Pragmatism is true because it works, without begging the question. The fact is, we cannot eliminate such terms as belief, or judgment, from our exposition; yet, retaining them, we cannot escape the error of defining truth in terms of truth.[1]

We may go with the Pragmatist a good way in his protest that truth is *in re*, as against abstract intellectualism; but the philosophical position maintained in this treatise is unaffected by the dilemma.

§ 9. *Pragmatism and Religion. Situation created by the Breach with Absolutism*

And now, when we apply the theory, as it stands, to the religious problem, we are met by the strenuous resistance of our subject-matter. Thankful as we are for the arguments which defend our beliefs as valid hypotheses, gladly as we welcome the recognition that they have been verified in human experience, we cannot rest satisfied with such a defence as the final ground of our faith. Probability, to quote Bishop Butler's well-

[1] See Dr M'Taggart's criticism of Prof. James's "Pragmatism," in *Mind*, January 1908 (which appeared after the above was written).

known words, is the guide of life; and in truth it does guide the first steps: but when once the seeker has reached the higher level he can tolerate mere probabilities no longer. He has felt deeper needs and has tasted of a deeper satisfaction.

But let us look a little closer. Let us see more precisely why religion—at least such religion as this treatise is concerned for—is pledged by its very nature to decline the proffered foothold. All apparent axioms, say the Pragmatists, are postulates. Now those postulates which have most the appearance of being axioms, such as the principles of mathematics, are those which are most obviously abstract. But it is the very fact that they are abstract that makes it possible to deny that they are axioms. A truth, as Pragmatism conceives it, is rooted in its context: it is that which brings a certain measure of coherence into a certain definite range of experiences. It is always abstract, in the sense that regarded apart from those experiences it has no significance or validity. So, conversely, our theories of fact, which are more easily regarded as postulates, can only be so regarded because they are conceived as abstract: they are only sections of our total knowledge: and they are none the less fragmentary though there be, as this school leaves us free to believe, no absolute whole or final system into which they could be fitted. Nay they only claim to be true in a particular context: that is why, considered absolutely, they are abstract. Now any truth that should embrace reality at its widest

circumference and touch the life of the individual at its innermost heart and centre, would be perfectly concrete truth, and as such could not be classed as a postulate. Yet this is what is meant by the claim of a highly developed religion, at least of Christianity, to be regarded as true. This is what the God-consciousness by its very meaning implies. An ordinary hypothesis is true just where it stands in the range of knowledge and in the history of thought. If it has indeed behind it a mass of experiences gradually accumulated, which it has rendered more luminous and coherent, yet on the other hand it has an indefinite future against which it is not insured. In the light of the science of ten years hence, it may appear faulty; in fifty years, a mere provisional theory which has done its work, and which already conveys less truth than error. So the element of truth in the hypothesis would continually dwindle towards vanishing-point. Now religious doctrines are, on one side, hypotheses of this order. They cannot be so dissociated from the general course of human thought as not to share its provisional character; yet *ex hypothesi* they must have another side, for they relate to the soul as such and to its world as such; they deal not with the internal, but with the external, relations of nature. The question which arises as to the permanent and the provisional elements in religion will come before us presently. All that need now be emphasised is that, as mere matter of definition, religion is committed to absolutism — not to the absolutism of the Idealistic

philosophy, but to immediate cognisance of central concrete reality.

Religion must be understood from within before it can be estimated from without. And, prior to all analysis, whatever enters into any creed is proved by that very fact to be significant for religion as such. Now every creed has its world-view; and this world-view, if true at all, must possess a higher kind of truth than can be claimed for the postulates of ordinary knowledge. If the existence of God were merely a postulate, it could only correct and enrich our conception of the world, but could not—as it actually does—raise it to a higher plane. For the concept of God cannot, by its very meaning, consent to occupy an ancillary position. Once accepted, the world must be defined in terms of God, not God in terms of the world. The Theistic world does not so much correct as replace the non-Theistic. He who rises from the one to the other sees all things with new eyes: reality for him, not merely as he knows *about* it, but as he *knows* it in spiritual communion, becomes richer and fuller because primarily spiritual.

Now it does not seem clear what attitude Pragmatism as such could consistently adopt towards this religious Absolutism. Inasmuch as the conviction of immediate religious knowledge, in some form or other, explicit or virtual, does undoubtedly bring intellectual and moral satisfaction, it must be regarded at least as a hypothesis possessing relative validity. But it is rather difficult to understand how such a conviction, if justified at all,

can fail to introduce absoluteness into the general world of thought. The protagonist of this school, Professor James, allows that those who receive peculiar and irresistible experiences of supramundane reality are right in yielding their assent to such experiences. But this same consciousness of revelation, this sense of a direct communion with the unseen, is not confined to special occasions, but lies at the centre of all deep personal religion. And if its validity is allowed, then once more we are brought round to the old question: Can religious knowledge be kept apart from ordinary knowledge? Nay more, the object of religious knowledge is a sphere of reality which, by definition, not merely blends with, but comprises and controls, the world of science and common sense. If so, Pragmatism must be prepared some day to find the religious consciousness asserting its right not merely to freedom, but to supremacy. It must settle its relations with religious thought which, starting from a centre of its own, shall claim philosophy itself for the service of the spiritual man. Surely such philosophy is not open to attack on the side of Pragmatism as such: and yet it would displace Pragmatism.

§ 10. *Pragmatism, like Rationalism, misses the Inwardness of Religious Feeling*

From what has been said, it should appear that "Radical Empiricism," just like the opposite school,

fails to do justice to the emotional side of religion, and from the same cause. No real justice being done to the immediacy of spiritual perception, feeling falls apart from knowledge. Not that Pragmatism would intentionally slight the emotions—far otherwise. But consider the position. There are two senses in which the emotions may be regarded as confirming our assurance of spiritual reality. Either from within—that is to say, we may abandon ourselves to that feeling of certitude which is an element in the emotion itself: but in this case it is not the emotion, as such, on which we rely, but the greater verisimilitude and impressiveness of its object to us while the emotion has hold of us. But here is the spiritual mind at once; and if we admit its validity, then surely it is better to do so boldly and explicitly: better to allow it to speak its message before the tribunal of philosophy than to conjure up illusions to fill the gaping vacuity. What is Atheistic Pantheism but the illusive clothing of nature with that divinity which religious emotion, if it does not find it, must create? It is the old question again: How can religious intuition, if accepted as valid, be withheld from satisfying its inherent tendency to enter into relations with the rest of our thought? Or again, we may regard the emotion coldly from outside, as one of the various psychological and other facts for which the religious hypothesis affords explanation. In this case we have enriched our data, but the method, with all its imperfection, remains the

same: for indeed the intellect is even more dissociated from the emotions when it diagnoses them than when it ignores them: and so the theory which started in opposition to Rationalism becomes chargeable with just that intellectual aridity against which it protests.

CHAPTER II

INTUITIVE THEISM

§ 1. *The Meaning of Mysticism*

THE whole purport of the foregoing remarks is to vindicate for religion an immediate vision of reality. Mysticism, conscious or implied, is the very heart and centre of all real religion: and this claim we must now seek to establish directly in that form which the present writer holds to be the sound one, and to give some suggestion of its resources for faith on the one hand and for philosophy on the other.

There could be no unfairer and shallower charge against Mysticism than that it is mere emotion, or that it makes emotion the guide and controller of thought. The mystic at least *thinks* that he sees. Sober Mysticism does not appeal—as is popularly imagined—to mere feeling, but to intuition; and those who brush it aside on the assumption that religious feeling is non-intuitive simply beg the question. Surely no thoughtful and enlightened person of this school would foreclose all discussion, and allow the mere intensity of his emotions to carry him away in their current. Speculative

Mysticism, or Intuitivism, we may call it, is quite prepared to meet other theories of knowledge on their own ground.

§ 2. *An Objection to Mysticism, which must be kept in View in the Constructive Discussion*

A similar but much more definite and respectable objection to Intuitivism will lead us at once, as we consider it, into the very heart of our subject. A direct experience of God is something merely "given." We have it while we have it; but we cannot pass it on to anyone else: and if we try to establish its rationality, then it loses its immediacy, and becomes merely one phenomenon among religious phenomena in general. If analysed, it is direct experience no longer. So it stands high and dry amid all the stress and change of our intellectual life. Its vitality depends on a particular mental attitude; and that attitude can hardly be maintained through all the complexities and changes of life and thought. There is a question which the soul of the mystic, not only his opponents, may ask: What if this apparent intuition, however vivid, be delusive? And this question cannot, in the nature of the case, receive any answer, because intuition does not argue; it can merely reiterate its assertions. But if it be supplemented and defended by argument, then our belief, except in moments of ecstasy, rests not on the supposed

intuition, but on the arguments; and spiritual consciousness supplies no longer the foundation, but at most the content, of our faith.

§ 3. *The Starting-point of a Theory of Knowledge. Descartes*

In order to reach a theory of intuitive spiritual knowledge, which shall be proof against this objection, let us start as far back as possible. Descartes began his philosophical investigation, or thought he began it, on a clear field. He started with doubting everything; then he went on to discover an inevitable positive assumption implicated even in this expression of universal doubt; and that was, the existence of the doubter. Now this argument may be accepted simply as helping to show that we cannot philosophise without assumptions. We may begin on an apparently clear field, in order to show that the field was not really clear, but had something on it to begin with, which gave us our start. It is not as though "I doubt everything" were the *ne plus ultra* of scepticism. It remains open to us not to philosophise at all, and I do not think that the Cartesian could carry the war into our retreat. Descartes' argument seems valid against theoretic scepticism, but hardly to afford the basis for a positive system. For, regarding it as constructive, an obstacle appears: Have we the right to commence from a particular proposition, because it appears to start us in our speculation without liabilities,

and then to advance from it by showing that this appearance is delusive? If the assertion, "I doubt," is made under a sense of philosophic responsibility, and means, "There is no belief, implicit any more than explicit, in my mind," then indeed it exposes itself to this refutation. But what if it merely expresses a state of mind of which he who makes it is conscious? It is not doubt that destroys itself, but dogmatic assertion of the objective doubtfulness of everything.

Descartes, therefore, succeeds in showing that we cannot start without assumptions, but I hardly think that he provides us with a positive basis. Mere dialectic cannot interfere with a man who should simply profess as a fact entire scepticism, including doubt of his own doubt. In such a case the sceptic might disarm opposition by freely admitting that though, for practical purposes, he assumed reality, that assumption was probably false; and dialectic is helpless just because it cannot move a step without *taking for granted* the opposite proposition — without translating the psychological *Dubito* of the sceptic into the metaphysical *Dubito* which alone it can analyse and refute.

The propositions, "I think," or "I doubt," may be used with a purely immediate and practical purpose, and may merely serve to connect the thought of the moment with the other psychic manifestations of the empirical person. The sceptic says, "I doubt everything," a purely empirical statement, expressing his own state of mind. Then it is taken out of his lips, and

nailed down as an absolute dogma of first principles. In this transference it changes its character.

If we regard the argument as an appeal to the consciousness of our own existence as given in the very act of reflection on our thoughts,[1] then we seem a step nearer the true criterion. Those who possess this intuition are certainly right, from our point of view, in taking account of it; but then the whole character and content of intuition must be examined, and our philosophy consistently built upon that basis. An isolated intuition depends on the feeling of the moment, and has no logical implications which can set us going on our constructive work.

§ 4. *Can we start with any Self-evident Proposition?*

Similarly, if we start with a proposition which is accepted as self-evident, then it would seem that we are fairly met by the objection: How is this self-evidence armed against the bare suggestion of its illusiveness? To rest upon a simple *non possumus*, to declare that we cannot help believing this or that, seems to me a very sorry refuge. To fight one's doubts by denying their existence is a self-contradictory proceeding; and the fact that our actions may reveal to ourselves certain beliefs latent within us does not prove that when, in a philosophical context, they appear doubtful, the doubt is not real. Within its sphere it *is* real. If we are

[1] This seems to be Descartes' meaning.

clearly conscious of it, if we cannot satisfy ourselves that it is intrinsically unreasonable, then there it remains; and it is quite meaningless to urge that, just because in ordinary life the doubt is quiescent and inoperative, we therefore do not really feel it when we feel that we feel it. I shall return to this subject presently.

§ 5. *The True Starting-point*

What then remains? This remains: that we start our inquiry with a *provisional* assumption, not merely logical, but concrete, and see if we can justify it on its own ground; an experience, in other words, starting with which we are able to throw the *onus probandi* on those who deny its validity. This experience, if valid, will be capable of being so defined and guarded, placed in such a position among the contents of the mind, that its inherent appeal shall carry conviction, undisturbed from without.

The assumption that the philosopher's datum must be a fixed point of absolute certainty cannot be allowed to pass. There need be no certainty at the start; there need only be the provisional impression of truth. All that philosophical analysis presupposes is a germinal or inarticulate world-view. The man who has none cannot make the start. But if the start can be made the thinker will proceed by the definite formulation of his ideas — by working out their implications, and so drawing them into a cohesion through which the necessary

elimination and correction will take place. He will be untroubled by external considerations; for by hypothesis there is nothing external to his subject-matter.

Beginning, then, with that acceptance of Reality which lies at the base of his entire conscious life, he looks to his philosophy to articulate, revise, and then confirm, the total presentation; and, above all, to focus that moment of immediacy which was diffused at the start.

Note that there is no limit set to the distance to which criticism may lead us from the starting-point. There is no hard core of dogma at the centre of our datum. Holding to the view maintained in this treatise, that rationality is in the object-world as such, presupposed in our rational processes, it is here claimed, in all consistency, that thought is really the self-adjustment of the Ego, so as to bring itself into fuller relation with this objective rationality, and so to deepen its world-view and its self-consciousness *pari passu*. Immediacy is present all along: it is present in that totality of organised experience from which the investigation starts, though it may not be possible for reflection to focus it at once. When focussed, it will be worked from in every direction: there will be an unbroken continuity, amid all change, answering to the continuity of the inner life-history of the thinker. If the cosmology of naïve common-sense proves in need of revision, that will be merely because the range of experience to which it belongs is not the whole or the highest. The lower world-view will be corrected, not by processes of abstraction, but

by drawing together, round an integrated Ego, the world of common sense with the world of spiritual communion, according to the inherent rationality of each.

Now this readjustment of the world-view as a whole is impossible unless, in some provisional fashion, it *is* a whole. There must be a centre to which all relativity is ultimately referred. Or we may put it thus: the whole must possess, as such, an individuality and a character. For this adjustment of experience presupposes both a manifold and a unity, and if these are the terms of the relation, the unity as well as the manifold must be given as such in intuition, however vaguely, and cannot be a logical abstraction. The individual thinker's *totum cognitum*, to be so treated, must be *given* as one, not only as many, even though this unity may express itself, prior to systematic reflection, by means of lower and inadequate categories. It must have its character as a unity from the beginning, just as the manifold has its character as such.

§ 6. *Theism as provisionally posited*

Now of course this does not apply, except in a remote sense, to everyone. But we are only concerned with those to whom it does apply. And it applies to all who, even vaguely and with misgiving, believe in God. For observe that the elements of the content of the God-idea are all meant as predicates of ultimate Reality, and are therefore elements in that comprehensive experience which is our

datum. These remarks apply, therefore, to all whose impression of the reality of God is sufficient to make them able and willing to accept the idea, as it were, on probation—as a starting-point, theoretical and practical, for a venture of faith which will test its truth.

Let us posit, then, not the barest and narrowest, but the broadest and most concrete datum—the Christian idea of God and the universe. It is not vital to our argument to do so. We might take some form of quasi-Theism, and then test its adequacy. But it is simplest to begin with what the writer holds to be the idea in all its completeness and integrity. For in the course of our articulating process we can eliminate the superfluities (if there be any), no less than we can fill in the gaps, of our provisional subject-matter.

This initial subject-matter, then, is not criticised as from without: for there is no standing-ground outside it: but it is attended to with a concentration of the whole Ego (which begins to realise its own unity in this concentration), and so develops by its own inherent laws in intensity and coherence, while experience forms itself anew according to the principles contained within itself.

We take our stand then, on Theism, in its full Christian meaning, so far as that can be defined without immediate reference to specific Christian doctrines. The relation of the doctrinal system to the simple belief in God will come before us in another chapter. At present we are concerned with Theism, and we take our stand on it, not as a cold idea, but as an experience—a vision,

so to speak, of spiritual reality, which has yet to be brought into relation with the rest of experience and thought. If it can be so brought into relation, it is then justified as valid even though we simply assumed it at the outset: and the reason is that, when we assumed it, it was already neither a mere hypothesis nor a formal necessity of thought, but an *experience* expressing itself in doctrinal formulas. Now regarded simply as experience, or consciousness, formulated, the doctrine must be true; for it cannot, of course, as such be erroneous. From other points of view the doctrine may be false, and whether it is to be regarded as essentially true, or as an error which—like all error—has some element of truth, depends on the character and relations of that experience which it formulates. But more on this point presently.

§ 7. *The Ontological Argument*

When we speak of Theism, then, we mean Theism, not as pure theory, but as experience; and that implies a certain *prima facie* sense of the truth of the idea. And here we must adopt a sympathetically critical attitude towards the unfairly treated Ontological Argument. This argument has been dismissed as "thrice-buried" —which indeed it is; because it is only buried to rise again with renewed vitality. It will probably require to be buried again and yet again before it consents to be still. However, we must recognise its large element of truth without committing ourselves to it as it stands.

Its failure, from the point of view here adopted, lies in its intellectualism. It starts with a bare idea of God which is available for the purpose even as contained in the mind of "the fool" who "hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" Our object, on the other hand, is to prove the validity of the God-consciousness: and the atheist, as such, has none: the idea of God is for him but an intellectual figment. A sense of God—such as we have undertaken to vindicate—must imply not simply an idea of God, but a certain impression of His reality. That impression may be almost obliterated by counter impressions and theoretical misgivings, but it exists as a tendency. The sense of God at least *claims* to be a genuine cognitive experience, and the proper task of Intuitivist philosophy is to remove whatever inhibits a full surrender to that claim.

§ 8. *The Idea of God considered as a Unitary Experience*

But now, can we regard so full and many-sided a doctrine as an experience; and, if we do so regard it, does it need any further proof? This question has really been answered already. If it be true that all knowledge is experiential, then every analysis of a complex belief presupposes a unitary experience, not contained as such in the elements to which the belief is reduced. Wherever we have a compact doctrine, however complex and analysable, we have an experience, and not merely

a combination of experiences or ideas. For a whole is more than an aggregate of its parts; it is endowed with a certain individuality; and as such it is a presented object. But of course, in taking this view, we cannot claim that all experience excludes error: for thus there would be no room for error anywhere. What we can claim is that our various beliefs depend ultimately upon some central, concrete, experienced truth: which truth, when set in the proper light, is self-evident. At that central point, immediacy and complexity must be found reconciled. We start, therefore, not with the mere concept of God, as it may exist in the mind of an atheist —for Atheism as such is the absence of experience— but with the concept associated with some impression of the reality of its object. This impression it is that sets the inquiry going. And this impression justifies *prima facie* the particular intellectual synthesis upon which it depends.

It may even be possible to commend this experience of God to some who cannot go the whole length with me as to the experiential character of all knowledge. In many cases a concept is so complex, and there is so little interest in it as a whole, that it appears rather as a rational harmony of diverse elements: the mind seems rather to assent to the process of reasoning than to feel the impression of truth in the whole. I do not admit that this is any real exception, but it suffices here to point out that the concept of God is not of this character. It is emphatically, at its highest, an idea

which carries with it a direct impression of the reality of its content, as distinguished from the mere assent to the validity of a train of reasoning. And besides, the concept itself is essentially unitary.

It is not within the scope of this work to show how the attributes of God form objectively an organic whole. It is here sufficient to note that they share, as a matter of fact, in this impression of reality. They are actually comprised in the God-consciousness as we find it in other people, and know it in ourselves. From one point of view, whatever may be their character from others, these attributes express some phase of that central intuition: otherwise, despite all arguments and all authority, it would perforce repudiate them. Let our views about them be revised afterwards: but let this revision be controlled, not by a weakened, but by a better developed, God-consciousness, which shall qualify the form through a deeper appreciation of the substance. Revision which is abstractly intellectual, and does not answer to a striving of the intuition to reach a deeper foothold and a richer content, is only able to correct incidental error at the cost of essential truth.

§ 9. *The Peculiar Position of the God-experience in the Mind*

And so, whatever the conditions of its evolution, or the arguments, since forgotten, that have led to its acceptance, whatever its constituent elements, this

concept possesses all the *prima facie* rights of a datum of experience. Now of course there are many impressions which, as soon as we reflect upon them, dissolve at once. They so readily reveal their subjective and irrational origin that they can exist only in relative isolation from the rest of our thought-life. But the God-experience, as we are dealing with it, is something more than this. It has a measure of stability: it is felt, not only at special seasons, but, in some degree, as an abiding fact of the inner life.

Now consciousness, as such, is by definition infallible, but in all particular cases in which we seem to be directly conscious of anything error is not inconceivable. The fact is, that the object cannot really be isolated. If it could, then simple apprehension would have full play. But the object has external relations, and though when it is viewed as far as possible in abstraction from these relations, it may impress its reality very strongly, yet such an attitude of mind, even if it gains its end for the moment, cannot be maintained. And the more the object is isolated the more it dwindles towards vanishing-point. It loses its content in losing its relations. On the other hand, the more it is regarded in connection with other objects the more we lose its individuality and certitude for our own personal experience.

Now the God-experience alone has the advantage both of isolation and of relationship. If it be true, there is no truth not expressible in terms of it. Theism involves a world-view; and all truth, carried to its final import,

enters into that view. It is only religious truth, as such, which is fully and finally concrete. It is only such truth that touches the innermost personality and the widest circumference. This character belongs to Christian Theism *ex hypothesi*, and any argument against it which assumes the contrary is a begging of the question. But now what follows? When once we have reached this centre, we must work out from it; we must not abandon it and work back to it repeatedly from different points in the circumference. We must build our castle on the height and thence survey the surrounding country. We must erect our fortifications and see if they will not withstand attack.

This experience of God, if true at all, is not merely one among many: it has not a place in our world-view; the world-view has a place in it. And as it is no mere hypothesis, but an experience, it gives us a positive object on which to lay hold, a sphere of consciousness which we can rest in and cultivate, even before it has drawn together and illuminated for us the world of reality around it.

§ 10. *Theism and the Burden of Proof*

This, of course, is not all. It must take "effective occupation." It must reveal its resources to meet, in some degree, not with a mere general assertion, but with specific illumination, the problems of the inner and outer life. But this will be considered presently.

We shall plead, in later chapters, for no all-absorbing Monism, but for belief in a God who has real relationships with real persons who are not mere phases of Himself. What we have claimed for Theism is that since, *ex hypothesi*, it is a final view of reality, a central experience in which all other experiences are finally involved, it must therefore be tested as such. We are so accustomed to lay the burden of proof upon positive assertion, and to construct a world of empirical reality on a background of not-being, that the force of the considerations here urged may be hard to grasp. They come to this. He who possesses the initiatory faith in a central concrete Being ought not to ask himself, as in other cases: "Why should I believe this?" but, "Why should I not?" For spiritual belief is not primarily, but only relatively, a matter of inference. Whereas other experiences do not carry with them any infallible clue to their place in the *totum cognitum*, and are therefore liable to change their character, and therefore their content, indefinitely, as their context changes, Theistic experience, on the other hand, determines its own position with regard to all other reality. It therefore only awaits confirmation; and that only in a subjective sense, which will be discussed presently.

The fact is that belief logically precedes disbelief. The world of the man of science, and of all educated persons in a scientific age, is a vast harmony, and whatever we reject as untrue we reject because it seems to introduce discord into that harmony, and at the same

time because the wide range of our knowledge enables us to discover alternative explanations. But we lose sight of the significance of this fact, because the harmony itself is merely empirical and incomplete, and can offer no final standard of reality. It is such a standard that Theism, as is here maintained, alone supplies.

§ 11. *Epistemological Significance of Worship*

But now, regarding the matter psychologically, we are led to ask: Must there not be a particular mental attitude towards the central spiritual reality, wherein it is directly discerned? Such there is—namely, the attitude of worship. Within this sphere the object of worship is known by immediate communion; and the most erroneous ideas that enter into it, so far as they supply inspiration and expression, are, in this sphere, only incidentally erroneous, essentially true. And in so far as worship itself is what it ought to be, the central function of the whole life, and the realities that it sees directly are the controlling principles of thought and conduct, so far, in respect of the individual himself, what is true for him as a worshipper is true for him as a man. There is no other way of deciding whether the truth in any given belief is substantial, and the error formal and unessential, or whether it is the error that is substantial, while yet, like all error, it is, in one aspect, perverted truth. This, as we shall see presently, must be qualified in view of the social aspect of truth. But

since it is the individual that is the subject of experience the social criterion cannot displace the personal.

The standard, therefore, of truth, and the final significance of all experiences, is to be placed, from this point of view, within the individual as such, and not in some region where he is transcended. On the other hand, relative though all particular truths may be, they are relative to no shifting standard, but point inwardly to the direct self-communication of eternal Being. That is why theology does ill to be confident, as it so often is, that certain old ideas have been for ever left behind. It is very easy to dismiss patronisingly some historical belief on the ground that it is merely the crude groping after truths that we plume ourselves on possessing in their pure form. But it is not by any means so easy as some imagine to avoid throwing away the kernel with the husk. Restatement is indeed a need of our times; but even the most necessary restatement is an exceedingly delicate process; and I believe that, at the very best, the restated doctrine loses something in the process: that our boasted theological evolution, unavoidable as it is, always eliminates some truth along with error.

But to resume. This central experience is such that we cannot put our finger upon it in its pure form. Abstracted from doctrine it appears as a sort of spiritual sensuousness. And, indeed, even as such it cannot exist out of connection with thought. Knowledge *of* God implies knowledge *about* God, though these two elements do not vary as each other. But that need not trouble

us. For none the less it is the point of convergence for all religious doctrines, and ultimately for all knowledge. It gives us a hold of the absolute element in these doctrines, as that through which we are brought into touch with final reality; and there is implanted and developed within us that direct communion with the Unseen which is at once the heart and goal of all spiritual knowledge, and the source of all spiritual activity. The sense of this communion does not reproduce itself, in its living and pure form, for abstract thought.

§ 12. *Symbolism*

In what sense is religious truth essentially symbolic? Any view of the symbol which regards it as coming between the percipient and the subject is altogether against our philosophy. And the reason why it is possible to recognise a symbolic element, and yet to refuse it such a place, lies in our thesis that knowledge is immediate just in so far as its object is concrete. The symbol is not a concrete embodiment of abstract truth for popular use. For the concrete is the *prius* of the abstract. The symbol is best described not as clothing, or even embodiment, but as form. It only makes religious knowledge less direct, in that, by relating it to the empirical world, it involves the possibility of incidental error. The form may not, or does not, convey the whole reality, but what it conveys it conveys directly.

A veil may be thought of apart from the object it veils, but a form is the form of the object.

On the side of the subject, we must think of the God-consciousness as enabled by the symbol to lay hold of that particular aspect of spiritual reality which is expressed by the symbol. From the point of view of the imagination and the understanding, it appears as though the cognition were indirect. But if it be true that the God-consciousness is central to the personality, then the whole act of cognition is primarily a direct apprehension. Relatively to the lower plane, the knowledge of God is mediate. But it would be a clear *petitio principii* to assume that the spiritual person as such lives upon this lower plane. If he does not, then we must express the meaning of symbolism somewhat thus : that the temporal element in the presentation, strained out, as it were, through the imagination, leaves the inner truth to reach the inner man with nothing between.

§ 13. *Form and Substance*

And this brings us to an important point. If spiritual cognition answers, as Christian Theism maintains, to the Divine self-revelation, then the precise meaning of the forms of knowledge in relation to the substance becomes clearer. For the form is thus determined by the object, which is exactly what our theory requires. We cannot gaze on pure unembodied truth ; and all that we have been saying brings into prominence the distinction

between form and substance. Yet on the other hand we equally require the proposition just laid down, that the symbol gives us the object not merely *through* but *in* itself. Therefore that particular form which, by tradition, or by independent thought, or both together, the truth assumes in the consciousness of any given individual, can only be the very self-expression of the object; or, in theological language, the very manner in which God has freely chosen to reveal Himself in the given case, according to His perfect knowledge of that particular individual, with all his characteristics and circumstances.

§ 14. *Error*

Before closing this chapter, it may be well to say something on a subject that has been near the surface almost throughout it—namely, the meaning of Error in a system resting on Intuitivism. "The truth or falsity of an experience," says Mr Joachim,[1] "depends, if you like to put it so, primarily upon *what* the experience is; but *what* the experience is, it is as a whole, and not in severance from the form under which its matter is experienced. And *what* 'the experience as a whole' is, can be revealed to human subjects only in so far as that experience is raised to the level of mediate thought." Now the doctrine here maintained escapes this criticism, as I think may be seen from what has been already argued. If the intuition of

[1] "The Nature of Truth," p. 57.

God takes that central place in the mind and the life which is here claimed for it, then thought does not mediate it, but subserves it, and cannot really get outside it. When I criticise my ordinary intuitions, I recognise that when they have misled me it was because I ignored the indefinite possibility of illusory influences in my own subjectivity. The truth at the heart of the intuition came to me, as it were, fortuitously, without adaptation to my state and prepossessions at the time. And the matter of the intuition disclosed no such relation to myself that should give the clue to its place in my experience. Therefore, around this core of reality, and concealing its location, an indefinite mass of delusion could gather. But the God-intuition, as we shall see more fully later, is also the focus of self-consciousness; and its content includes conscious self-revelation of the Object. Error may gather round it; but it provides its own standard for distinguishing the essential truth from the sphere of the possibility of error. This Object, being central, cannot, as we have seen already, shift its place in the field of experience.

Now it is true that we have maintained the perceptive character of *all* knowledge. But then, when we speak of knowledge, we presuppose the truth of the known fact. What, then, is the subjective difference between real and apparent perception? Let us consider this point carefully.

Error, though personal in its origin, may become social. A man may make mistakes—so we may call them—

which are not really *his* mistakes, but merely assumptions taken unreflectingly from those around him. Now in this case the error, as unreflectingly shared by the individual, need not concern us. It is not a judgment. The real problem is that of its entrance into the world—the actual fact of erring in the original case. The individual only errs in his own person when, given all his particular circumstances—his total context without which he would be a meaningless abstraction—he goes astray in the handling of the material presented to his judgment: that is to say, the mere unreflecting acceptance of presentations is not error in the individual considered as such. Retention of the wrong view when it is questioned may turn it into the man's own personal error. But even so, he is misled by prepossessions which belong to him simply in his social character. His error, so far as it is *his*, means a fresh breakdown of his personal intellectual machinery. But this implies imperfection as a person: it implies that he is not adjusted to his proper centre. He receives intuitions, therefore, to which his subjectivity offers no proper correspondence, because its relation to the object-world is ill adjusted. And thus also the unity of his selfhood is impaired. There is an imperfect apperception, a failure of cohesion both on the subject side and in his world as known to himself. The intuition meets an abstracted fraction of his mind, and itself assumes the character of an abstract fragment of the not-self. So he may receive it wrongly and afterwards find out his error: but the error is not internal to the intuition

as such. So far as the intuition can be regarded as strictly isolated, and his mind, in receiving it, as performing a function isolated from his inner life as a whole, it is by definition true, though so far nugatory. But this isolation cannot be absolute. The content of the intuition has wider implications, and the mind provides for it a context. In absolute isolation—which is impossible—as in complete integration, there could be no error.

The possibility of error, then, disappears on the plane of the ideal self which, for our philosophy, is the presupposition of the empirical. Think of an intuition as received by the central self: then it is an absolute intuition, and as such absolutely true. And *all* truth, for us who explain the universe through God and the natural man through the spiritual, is the property of persons *qua* in realised possession of their true selfhood.

For our method works, not in the first instance from the abstract to the concrete, but from the inchoate and inarticulate world-view to the explicit cosmology. Therefore we are under no obligation to abstract from the objective reference of the psychic act. We can say boldly that, while there is truth in all apparent perception, yet it is entitled to be called perception only *qua* veridical. And we are provided with a standard of truth in that we have already accepted provisionally a real inner self as the subject of perceptions and the principle of their unity and coherence, and, answering to this, a normative centre of reality on the object side. We explain the abstract through the concrete, not *vice versa*; confident that the

concrete will find *its* vindication as self-revealed to the basal consciousness of the inner man, by drawing within its domain the entire sphere of consciousness, and bringing into captivity every thought to its obedience.

CHAPTER III

EXPERIENCE AND ITS EXPRESSION

§ 1. *Discrimination between Experiences*

IN this chapter we have to consider the relation of spiritual experience to ordinary knowledge, and of the convictions of individuals to the formulated doctrines of the religious community. It will be well to begin with certain questions raised by modern Psychology of Religion.

The study of religious experience has reached results which seem at first sight to discredit any high claims put forward on behalf of spiritual intuition. The radical dependence of what seems like direct illumination upon physical conditions; the often disappointing after-effects; the close analogy between experiences long regarded as exclusively Christian, and others occurring among peoples of lower faiths; the absurdity or repulsiveness of many an alleged revelation, which nevertheless carries as intense a conviction to its subject as the purest and soberest intuitions of other minds—all these things provoke, and ought to provoke, careful thought. It is perfectly fair to say that the reality of spiritual experiences should be judged by their results; but this, though true, is quite insufficient. For the very meaning of spiritual intuition

lies in its inwardness and immediacy ; and if we employ our spiritual experiences solely as data for the intellect, we have abandoned the intuitive standpoint. A vision of eternal reality which must be judged *ex post facto*, before we admit its validity, becomes something quite different from an intuition, even if it passes the scrutiny. It becomes merely a spiritual sensation from which we may draw inferences favourable to faith. And so, although the relation of the experience to the whole life must enter into our explanation, this method of testing by results is by itself entirely insufficient to meet the needs of the case. Whatever use we make of this test, we must seek also to define the area of spiritual apprehension, and to justify it, so defined, not only in respect of results, but in respect of the experience itself, at the moment when it is felt. The test, in other words, must help us to trust future intuitions, by guiding us, in some measure at least, to a discrimination of the true from the false, and so to the cultivation of that state of mind that conduces to sound and healthy insight.

§ 2. *The Essentially Individual Character of Intuition*

Can we then rid ourselves of that singularly chilling and depressing influence which the Pyschology of Religion carries, without evading its issues in the slightest? Now the first remark I would make—and this takes us more than half the way—is that religious experience, by its very meaning, has a secret nucleus, so to speak,

which cannot be known from without. To each is given "a white stone, and on the stone a new Name [of God] written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." This, if the fact of personal revelation be admitted, is inevitable. However universal in its import, the form of revealed truth is adapted to the particular individual just where he stands. And it follows from what has been said that the particular aspect communicated is not quite the same to one man as it is to another. For the symbol, as we have been trying to understand it, is more closely to be identified with the substance than as its medium of expression: it is a section of truth so selected and cut out as to fit the capacities and needs of a complex individuality, perfectly known to the Revealer. Now it is a common saying that no two of us see the same rainbow. Each of us occupies his own standpoint, which no other can strictly and absolutely share. And this location of every individual in the cosmos becomes a fact of deeper and wider import for us the more we are led, in the development of our inner life, to a grasp of the meaning of individuality. It is a lesson that we must learn for ourselves, and can only within limits help one another to understand. But it is possible, even in this short essay, to point out something of its significance for religious life. So far as we grasp it, we are saved from that peculiar confusion of our own personality with that of others, which in ordinary matters is a necessity, but in the sphere of eternal knowledge so easily leads us astray. When

we are thinking of the ordinary experiences of life we readily imagine ourselves in the place of others. When another person relates to us any experience, we blend, as it were, our own personality with his when we imagine that experience. But the nearer we get to that hidden nucleus of spiritual intuition the less is this possible. Sometimes we hear or read the fervent language of someone who claims constant and direct communion with God, and whose life bears out the claim; and in spite of all the earnest effort to impart some of that experience to us, we feel that the attempt is not only inadequate, as it must be, but defeats its own end. Even though there may be real sympathy, yet the impression of God which awes and wins the one mind seems crude and almost repellent to the other. And yet it is so natural a tendency to try to see through another person's eyes in matters of religion that we feel and regret the jar. Indeed, this communion of finite spirits is so vital to religious faith that we may well be pardoned if its absence leaves a sense of isolation. Nay, more, it is a sacred duty to cultivate this, and to ignore, as far as we can possibly ignore, the jarring elements in the sincere and devout belief of anyone with whom we are united on a common foundation. Yet it remains true that God speaks to each, and not simply to both at once. The right course for us is to use the help that others can afford us without depending on it; and, conversely, the soundest spiritual influences are those which point us beyond themselves—those which do not so much present the object as give light to the eyes that see it.

Now this seems to afford us some clue to the immense divergence and apparent incompatibility between the most direct and inspiring spiritual experiences of different persons. It is indeed remarkable, yet deeply significant, that the nearer we get to the centre of our several personalities the more united and yet the more distinct do we become. This will be seen to fall in with suggestions in a later chapter. Here let us note the relief it gives us from the psychological chill. The men and women who, say in another age or country, in circumstances very unlike our own, have lived upon visions of God which to us are darkness rather than light—what shall we think of them? Shall we disturb ourselves by wondering what our vision would seem to the religious minds of later ages than our own? Shall we content ourselves with admitting that we are playing with gilded fictions—lent, it may be, from distant spiritual worlds, in pity of our ignorance, that our desperate grasp may not close upon an utter void? No; for none but we ourselves can see the vision as we see it; and when we look into the minds of other men, and a certain sense of strangeness, or even repulsion, mingles with our sympathy, let us remember that what they see face to face we see obliquely—that even though they may express the central article of their faith in a proposition to which we cannot assent, yet the element of truth in that proposition, incidental for us, may be for them the very essence of a Divine revelation. So when we consider how formulated knowledge is not self-contained, but shades off inwardly from the circumference

to pure consciousness of God in an inarticulate communion of our spirits with His, we shall not distrust our experiences because another, standing at a different angle, finds them incongruous with his own.

§ 3. *Ecstatic and Rational Mysticism*

But still this is not all. It remains that these direct experiences sometimes have very little bearing on the main current of life, or even a harmful bearing. Take the man as a whole, and it seems in such cases impossible to regard them as central even for him. Perhaps they are the result of hypnotism, or some other external and accidental cause, and, even with the utmost allowance for individual variation, cannot appear to the thoughtful observer otherwise than morbid; and still more if, when the excitement is over, the exorcised spirit brings back with him seven others, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Then there is the one-sided Mysticism that seeks to absorb the individual into the universal Spirit—the self-hypnotism of the Indian *yogi*, the various excesses of Christian Mysticism, and every form of indulgence of the cosmic consciousness at the cost of thinking away thought.

Now this is a fine point, however lightly it may be dismissed by those who have no concern for the cause of spiritual intuition, or little sense of what it involves. The question is, how are we to cut ourselves off from

responsibility for such experiences without abandoning the Intuitivist basis on which we have taken our stand ?

The real difficulty lies, not in admitting that such experiences testify truly to contact with a larger spiritual Reality, but in regarding them as the deliberate self-revelation of a personal God. We know not *a priori* what physical and even pathological conditions may set free the suspended consciousness of a deeper self. The difficulty comes in when we take our stand on ethical and personal Theism. We cannot think of the Christian God as directly revealing Himself under conditions not conducive to true enlightenment and to moral health and usefulness. Now we who hold that the knowledge of God is fundamental have no right to set even ethical considerations against any form of God-consciousness, unless we claim for ethics an equally deep foundation —that is, unless we hold that the personal and moral character of God is fundamental for spiritual experience. But is not such experience discredited by the radical discrepancy between the testimony of Mystics, ethical and ecstatic ?

Now it is just this very impersonality of the mystic All that helps us out of the dilemma. For it is clear that our relation to God has a wider area than our consciousness of Him. " In Him we live and move and have our being." And if we try to think of God in His relation to our individual lives, when each is considered in abstraction from the created universe on the one hand, which is

His self-expression, and, on the other, from the conscious personal self that knows Him in its inner chambers, then His personality does not appear. God is personal to us *qua* persons. But it is the strange function of personality that it can stultify itself. The *yogi*, sharply differentiating himself from empirical reality, thereby intensifies his selfhood; but even while he does so, he contracts it, consciously and deliberately, towards vanishing-point. He identifies himself with reality *qua* absolute, and in so doing abandons the attitude of reciprocity. The Ego, in losing its environment, loses its content: pure self-consciousness is its own annihilation. Such an attitude towards supreme Being is impersonal, and therefore non-ethical. But all this need not disturb us, for the whole object of our discussion is to justify spiritual intuition to reason, and therefore as the possession of the rational and social personality. Ecstatic experiences, so far as they are such stand apart from the main current of life and thought: they are only valid from within, not from without. The only consistent proof with which a mystic of this type can provide himself of the validity of his experiences is to remain in them as much as possible. No such experience can be expected to establish itself in thought because it is in its very essence the suicide of thought. We have only to give our rational and social nature its rights, and our personality is preserved. But if it is preserved, so is the personal character of our communion with God preserved. And the very fact that these ethical difficulties about Mysticism arise, and that we

are facing them, is itself a guarantee that we are so far forth preserving our personality.

There is no reason to distrust ecstatic experiences in themselves. If they lead us to abandon or pervert our belief in a personal God the fault lies in our interpretation of them. We err because, when we recall them, or judge of them in others, we imagine ourselves standing, in all the fulness of our reflective individuality, face to face with the chaotic vision which belies our truest conceptions of God. We picture ourselves holding communion as persons with God as impersonal. But this is just what does not take place within the experience itself. Just in so far as God is not seen as personal, so far the personality of the percipient is in abeyance. Imagination after the event leads us astray; and it is easy to understand why. In ordinary cases we carefully recall what we have seen or heard, but any differences between our mental state then and now is generally ignored in the recollection. And likewise in imagining a flash of spiritual insight we think rather of its objective than of its subjective side. But the subjective is all-important: because in such cases, unlike ordinary life, the difference between the state of the subject at the moment of illumination and his state when he thinks of it afterwards, or that of another who hears or reads about it, is of the greatest significance, and cannot be ignored without misinterpreting the experience. Our difficulty, then, is due to our attempt to stand at once inside and outside the mystic state.

§ 4. *Spiritual Intuition in Relation to Life as a Whole*

This applies in a greater or less degree to all special experiences in so far as they are fenced off from the ordinary life. But have we not conceded too much? Where is our Intuitivism? Have we merely resorted to that *ex post facto* test, which has been pronounced an abandonment of our standpoint? This question calls up the objection before noted, that intuition is merely valid at the moment, and is disconnected with the general train of our thought. The objection has really been answered already, but we can now meet it explicitly, and in so doing further define our position. Behind all thought and all life there is an inevitable assumption, a belief in some sort of comprehensive reality. Now if the general position adopted in this work is accepted, that reality must, when explicit in the life that finds its own true meaning, emerge as a concrete object of experience. But I will not press this just now. We are all of us conscious at least of certain specific beliefs which determine our actions, and are always present, implicitly when not explicitly, to our minds. They are not outside our lives: they are not isolated: and the more we direct our lives in accordance with them the deeper these beliefs become. Now this is obviously the case with a thoroughly devout and consistent believer in God. Those who deny that this is intuition, because it is precisely such a belief that needs to be proved true, only

beg the question. I have already endeavoured to show that, regarded in its central significance for the person whom it possesses, it is inexpugnable; and that, even as a formulated doctrine, the burden of proof lies in its favour when doubts arise. Now, having defended the God-consciousness from this point of view, we are not at all dependent upon anything occasional and ecstatic. The intuition is simply an explication of that cardinal assumption upon which all life and thought proceed. Or—not to widen the issue more than necessary—it is at least an assumption which has proved itself capable of taking this fundamental place in life and thought. The objection with which I am dealing supposes the intuition to break in from time to time from without, and merely to compel conviction by its own intensity. And so no doubt it does even with many truly religious persons who have been accustomed to rely on the ordinary proofs of the existence of God in their popular form. The higher intellectual life is so far severed from the personal whole that, when these flashes spring up from the hidden depths of personality, either they are suppressed by the reason, because it does not know what to make of them; or reason is suspended in their interest; or yet again, they are accepted as mere mental phenomena, and hold no better position than that of *primus inter pares* among the rational proofs. What is needed is that the religious mind should understand its own position, —should boldly recognise, as the New Testament does, the experiential character of its knowledge of God, and

should deliberately live within that experience. And living within that supreme experience, all the special and more thrilling feelings which are aroused from time to time are no longer either irrelevant or tyrannical. They become not so much fresh flame as fresh fuel. Just because we do not allow them to carry us away, they spread themselves over the life as a whole, and raise the world-view to a higher spiritual level.

When the God-consciousness has become thus fundamental for life as a whole—even as its Object is the ground of all being—then these special occasions of renewed intuition will have all the character of true knowledge. Thought and conduct having been built upon the experience of God, that experience, when directly enjoyed, will be ethical, personal, and rational. It will be genuine immediate knowledge,—knowledge, because it will no longer depend upon isolation for its validity. It will transcend the antithesis, not of self and God, but of personal and social life, being-for-self and relationship, relative and absolute truth. However determined in its form, or even substance, by tradition or auto-suggestion, it will not be thereby discredited: for, when God is not viewed in abstraction from the conditions under which He reveals Himself, all these determining factors share the eternal significance into which the entire personal life is gathered up.

And so, as our thoughts about God and life develop, their convergence towards a central Object will reveal their source in a central intuition. They will present

themselves as, before all else, the explication of inarticulate experience, the partial interpretation of words which no man can utter, heard in the innermost chambers of the soul. Thus the whole rational construction will be built upon the basis of immediacy, and experience will hold the lantern to reason.

§ 5. *The God-consciousness and the Will. The "Will to believe"*

We are now in a position to consider the relation between the God-consciousness and the will—that is to say, the entire active and moral life. The "will to believe" has already come before us in another connection. I must own that the theory expressed by this phrase carries no conviction, if indeed any real meaning, to my mind. We may will to think in such a manner that no consideration adverse to our belief shall have more than its proper weight, that all mere prejudice and vague imaginings shall be ignored; we may will to act as though the belief were true; we may even—but who would recommend this?—will to think partially, or to place ourselves under such conditions that judgment becomes warped. Indeed, the nearest approach to the "will to believe" would perhaps be self-hypnotism. But how belief *per se* can come within the scope of free activity seems very difficult to understand.

§ 6. *The True Place of the Will in Belief*

The importance of the will in relation to belief, in our theory, is vital. For the God-experience belongs in the most fundamental sense to the person as such. We have seen reason to admit its rights *de jure* ; and for this purpose it was sufficient to posit the idea of God as conveying a certain impression of reality. But if we are to stop there, then we become intellectualists at once. This impression changes its entire character if it hides itself behind the intellect. We are bound to give at least some hint of how the impression itself may deepen and spread, till it has taken the whole sphere of life into its compass ; how, having made good its claim *de jure*, it will find the road open to *de facto* sovereignty.

Now it seems clear that when we speak of assuming the validity of spiritual experience we mean that the assumption is made for some special purpose. So far the Pragmatist teaching seems justified. We might feel an impression that such and such is the case, and then pass on to other things, without that impression consciously determining our activity, mental or physical, in any way. But when, in a further sense, we accept any proposition as true, that can only mean that within a given sphere we act, or at least think, in accordance with the view of things which it gives us. We cannot choose whether to believe it or not ; but we can choose whether to ignore or to act upon our first impression of its truth.

And mere passive impressions, as is well known, tend to become obliterated. Doubt and belief, in fact, have no meaning *in vacuo*. Apart from the mere intensity of the impression, our beliefs become real to ourselves through our acting upon them. This implies, most certainly, that the belief exists in a latent form prior to the action; but such belief, so long as, being able to act upon it, we neglect to do so, is isolated and withers away. So if the God-consciousness is to become fundamental and dominant we must assume its validity within the whole life. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." By so living we prove to ourselves that we possess this consciousness; we keep it before our eyes, and so it persists and intensifies.

§ 7. *The Fundamental Function of the Will*

But, it may be said, we all live up to our convictions but very imperfectly, and the best are the most conscious of imperfection. Are we not be to allowed thorough conviction until we have attained to the ideal life? What right, above all, has the halting and somewhat cold-hearted believer to that strong assurance which nevertheless he often possesses, while many truer and better men can only follow a distant and flickering light? Shall we, then, allow the fact of our strong assurance to flatter our spiritual pride? Or, on the other hand, shall we distrust and resist the feeling of conviction,

because it seems to have outstripped the growth of our moral and spiritual personality ?

There is no need to fear this dilemma. It is true that spiritual assurance and practical holiness have a tendency to act and react on each other. And so, further, it would seem to follow from what has been said that their variations must exactly correspond. But this is not really so ; and for this reason.—The primary purpose in which the God-consciousness actualises itself is not the mere sum-total of good purposes, considered as many, but the supreme purpose, the ultimate motive, which runs through them all. And this supreme purpose is not thus broken up and distributed through the empirical life. In that form alone, it could not exist. It may find definite and complete expression at any time : for indeed it is nothing else than self-consecration. It is not, of course, a mere abstract and ecstatic act of worship. By its very meaning it has reference to life ; but to life considered as a whole. It is a purpose which disposes directly of self as such, to do and to suffer the will of God. Those who think that they ought to test the reality of this self-consecration by facing in imagination the possible remote trials to which their fidelity may be subjected, misunderstand its true nature. For it is not the empirical self in this or that hypothetical situation that is the primary object of surrender, but self as such ; and the faith which it expresses is a faith in God as able and willing to suit the trial to the soul that He tries, and, when the time comes, to equip the soul for the trial.

Between the God-consciousness, then, on the one hand, and the daily life on the other, there is this initial and fundamental purpose which is the supreme expression of freewill. In so far as it is really present in any given life, it necessarily presupposes the God-consciousness, and as necessarily issues in a higher ethical life. There is the deepest significance in the assurance: "If any man willeth (θέλει) to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

It has been well remarked that so far from Hell being "paved with good intentions," it is Heaven in fact which is so paved. For surely, though the good intention fail to produce its effect, merely through moral weakness, no weakness as such can be as evil as the deliberate right direction of the will is good; and if the failure is of deliberate purpose, then an evil intention has replaced the good one; and that not because the good intention was merely an intention, but because it was not sufficiently deep and strong. In short, all actions, ethically considered, point back to their motives, and all particular motives to the main bent and purpose of the life.

§ 8. *The Will in relation to Specific Beliefs*

A word more, and our examination of the will in relation to religious knowledge will be for present purposes complete. By acting on our convictions, as already indicated, our latent consciousness becomes explicit: we know that we know: and thus our knowledge is

lifted to the plane of reflective life. But, it may be said, is the God-hypothesis, just in the form in which we receive it, the only one that affords a natural basis for a perfectly good life? Can we act up to our beliefs in just such a specific manner that our conduct would not serve as consistently for beliefs not quite the same as our own? Or, to put the matter otherwise, has every element in our God-consciousness a correlative in our practical life? Now this question will be answered on one side in the chapter on Revelation. Here I would simply point out that just in so far as it is the innermost, and therefore most entire, self that is disposed of by the will with reference to a particular Theistic creed, so far will that creed be adopted by the God-consciousness — which belongs precisely to that innermost self — as essentially true. A purely uninteresting belief could not indeed be so verified. But a belief that meets the deepest emotional requirements, as all belief must that calls into activity the deepest self in each of us, vindicates itself as essentially true by the only criterion which can decide whether the truth or the error in any given formula is fundamental for the person who adopts it. Surely we miss the great value of this verification of creed by life, not only because we are weak and self-willed, but because we are fatally liable to rest in secondary motives, and to fix our eyes on lower ideals, without continued reference to that which is supreme above them all.

§ 9. *Relation of Spiritual to Ordinary Knowledge.* (1) *Subjective Aspect*

But we have now to consider more explicitly the relation of spiritual to ordinary knowledge: first on the subjective side. It is a question of intellectual harmony. There would be no difficulty if Theism afforded us a key, instantly available, to unlock every problem, nor even if there were no apparent conflict between religious beliefs and other knowledge. But such apparent conflict is apt to arise. Now in the first place we are bound to see that our religion occupies that dominant position with reference to our lives that shall enable its voice to be heard above all opposition and to carry a conviction stronger than any disturbing suggestion. But more than this: if spiritual knowledge is really the unifying centre of our whole intellectual life, it must not merely repel antagonistic influences, but transform them. If the fact of doubt is to be shown not inconsistent with that immediate cognisance of the highest reality which is here maintained to be a genuine fact, then a positive place, though subsidiary and provisional, must be found for doubt in the economy of the spiritual life.

Now if a man goes through life clinging to some favourite theory, which he holds himself bound to defend against all opposition from without and misgivings from within, then either of two results follow. In the main, probably, his mind will be warped, and he will suffer the

evils, too familiar to need dwelling upon, which follow upon all deviation from loyalty to truth as such. On the other hand, the mere fact of his bias may lead him into new regions of truth which he would otherwise never have discovered. And this is not a merely accidental result. For a certain element of forcing enters of necessity into all our thinking. We reach certain provisional conclusions, and we proceed from them by trying how they will fulfil their promise. Verification cannot be a matter of absolutely cold indifference. The very motive-power of all investigation is the desire to reach conclusions; and, under normal conditions, there must be a predilection in favour of a promising hypothesis. It may be said that this predilection need not be strong enough to bias our reasoning. So it need not: but I am now only concerned to point out that this deliberate effort to verify is fundamental: because, if so, then it cannot be excluded from the search for that highest truth in which the innermost man is to find satisfaction. It will not be enough that this bias is resisted: it must be shown how, on this highest plane, the deliberate cleaving to specific truths is not inconsistent with the most faithful service of truth as such.

Now it is clear that religious doctrine, in proportion as it calls forth that devotion of life and that repose of spirit which, in its highest forms, it logically demands, cannot possibly be a matter of coldly impartial investigation. Yet it must be shown that the cause of truth is not thereby compromised.

It is often said that we should love truth before all else ; but it belongs by very definition to a consistent Theism, that this truth-in-itself before which we are to bow down is an empty abstraction. Truth, like all other ideals, is hypostatised only in God. The value of this virtue in an unbeliever is, for us, bound up with our dissent from his interpretation of his own highest impulses.

The question is, how shall we do justice both to our religious convictions and to truth, when it seems to conflict with them ? And, as a preliminary question to this, we have asked, what form does loyalty to truth take when the very meaning of this obligation is rooted in that very conception which, by its supreme appeal to our deepest feelings, seems to make impartiality more and more hopelessly impossible ? The fact is, that the deeper our consciousness of God, the greater the sense of security with which we shall think and investigate ; and that not only because our intellectual conviction will be too strong to be shaken by difficulties, but because the God-consciousness has in itself a two-sided characteristic which tends to give it supremacy among our ideas. In the first place, it is regulative : it is the highest criterion of reality. For consistent Theism is in itself a world-view, a conception of the universe, as well as of a supreme Person ; and so, in proportion as it influences the mind, it must gather round itself, as a centre, all ideas that are seen to bear on it at all. That system or harmony of our ideas, conformity with which is the ultimate test, for each of us, of truth or falsehood, is, for the consistent

Theist, implicated in his Theism. Consequently, a vast amount of presupposition is excluded from the foundations of his thought, which, if not excluded, would tend to issue in conclusions impossible for the spiritual consciousness to assimilate. The pretensions of men of no definite belief to impartiality in treating of subjects bearing on religion are not to be listened to for a moment. For it seems hardly questionable that even devout believers in God, in so far as they fail to bring the various sections of their world-view into unity with that belief, are bound to build on hypotheses that are ultimately inconsistent with it, though the inconsistency may not appear till they have built high. For obviously our world is a cosmos not only in so far as we see it in God. It is synthetised even for the most unspiritual mind. But if indeed its true meaning and unity is only to be found in a complete ethical and personal Theism, then this provisional synthesis, when, working from it, we find ourselves face to face with religious problems, must reveal not only insufficiency but often contradiction. Or, looking at the matter from the other side, when a religious doctrine finds itself in a context of secular thought, which secular thought does not rest ultimately upon a consistently Theistic world-view, it is apt to find itself inhospitably received, because it appears as an incompatible stranger. In short, Theism, if it is what it claims to be, has implications reaching to the utmost limits, far beyond our power to trace them; and, if so, it is not to be wondered at that we sometimes arrive at conclusions

which, formed without a perception of those implications, are difficult to reconcile with all that we believe about God. Without dwelling upon any particular example, I would just drop a hint in passing that the above remarks have a special bearing upon New Testament criticism.

But then there is the other aspect of this relation between spiritual and ordinary knowledge. Those ideas that lie immediately around the central spiritual experience hold a peculiar position of advantage by virtue in part of a special rigidity and in part of a special plasticity. In so far as they are felt directly to embody that experience, they share its immediacy, and when any discrepancy with other knowledge appears to arise, we not merely believe but feel that it is only the form and not the essence of the religious idea that is at stake. And on the other hand the form, just for that very reason, becomes more plastic. The experience need not suffer, and may gain, by the readjustment. It certainly is not unaffected; if indeed we have rightly rejected that view of religious doctrine which regards it as a wrapping, or at best a symbolic medium. The doctrine is *in* the form. But when the form at any given point is modified, this only means—in so far as the spiritual self rises true to the occasion—that the experience is widened, or at least clarified by the elimination of incidental error. In such a case one has no sense of shifting one's position, even a little. There is a word more to be said on this point, when we come to discuss the social aspect of religious belief.

§ 10. *Relation of Spiritual to Ordinary Knowledge.* (2) *Objective Aspect*

With regard to the objective connection between religious and ordinary knowledge, it is impossible here to do more than indicate the general direction which a full discussion would take. All that is necessary is to consider the position of those recognised proofs of the existence of God which form the *tertium quid* between spiritual consciousness and ordinary secular knowledge. It is clear that, on our hypothesis, such proofs are profoundly necessary and significant, in some form or another; because we have seen reason to disallow the severance of these two parts of knowledge. Yet, on the other hand, it is equally obvious that to allow them the fundamentally positive and objective value which is commonly claimed for them would be quite contrary to a philosophical doctrine which finds in the spiritual consciousness the ultimate ground of all cognition. Now it appears to me that the value of these proofs must be regarded as subjective, or *ad hominem*; or, on the objective side, as negative. Let me try to put this more explicitly. These proofs simply rule out views of the universe which are opposed to the Theistic hypothesis. The disfavour with which they are sometimes regarded seems to arise from taking them as actual constructions built up out of a previously neutral material. But their value does not depend upon this assumption. Take the Teleological

Argument. It is sometimes set aside because of the leap which it makes from the finite to the infinite—because its conclusion contains more than its premisses. Now Intuitivism gives it a foothold of solid ground when it projects itself into the sphere of ultimate Being. The responsibility for providing a positive idea of God is taken out of its hands. But then the nature of the argument changes. For the God-consciousness will not accept this responsibility and still remain in a subsidiary position. The teleological proof is at once seen in its true light, as that which, by cutting away from the intellect its false materialistic foothold, drives it inward to its true home. For, according to our theory, in so far as nature as such is not seen by us in God—does not speak to us directly and primarily of God—so far our world-view is not merely inadequate but false. This proof guides us to a standpoint from which, though provisional and even tending to suggest relative misconception, God is brought nearer because Naturalism has become unthinkable.

So with regard to the arguments drawn from our moral consciousness. Their value does not consist in leading us to infer *per saltum* the existence of a moral Being to whom we are responsible. Their true function, surely, is to remove inhibitions: to help the ethical man so to realise the true inner meaning of his own moral intuition that the Theism implicated therein shall reveal itself; that the spiritual vision shall be so clarified that whereas it saw at first only a law or an ideal, it shall at length see God.

It is hardly necessary to say more about these arguments, except to point out that the remarks already made about the ontological proof are exactly on the same lines.

§ 11. *Significance of Religious Doubt*

But when this subject of the connection between spiritual and ordinary knowledge came up for consideration, I gave some hint as to the significance of religious doubt; or at least suggested that it must have a significance, as such, in the higher life of the soul. We are now in a better position to consider this point. And we may consider it by facing the question: How, in view of the immediacy of spiritual perception, can certainty ever fail? Granted that particular beliefs, not vital to the central communion of the spirit, may sometimes be shaken, how is it that doubt often finds its way up to the very citadel of faith? And granted, again, that this is due to the weakness of our faith, still what essential advantage has intuition, in this respect, over rational probability, if it equally fails to guarantee assurance? Now of course we need not imagine that all mystics enjoy unbroken assurance, especially if they rely upon emotion. All that can be done is to point the way to it. But still it remains true that the fact of doubt must be assigned its place, and its real character must be explained in connection with our general scheme. Now let it be noted that doubt, for the spiritual man as such,

differs fundamentally from doubt in all other departments. Let us carefully consider this position. All difficulties and misgivings that really disturb the spiritual life, by the very fact that they do so, are events *in* the spiritual life. And if spiritually met they call forth some specific form of the God-controlled activity of the soul; they draw out some latent element in the infinite resources at our disposal, whereby the reality of the object of faith impresses itself afresh, in just such a manner as to meet the specific need. The doubt itself, therefore, as such, enters, like all else that has any direct relevance for our personal religion, into the sphere of spiritual communion. The greater its intensity, so far forth as the spiritual man is true to his character, the more profound is its significance as a discipline, and so the greater the revelation of God which it evokes. He who truly lives within that supreme and comprehensive experience which is the subject of my attempt at exposition, knows, in that experience, not merely God, but God as related specifically to himself, and therefore knows his whole empirical life as divinely ordered and, because so ordered, full of fresh possibilities for the knowledge of God. In no other kind of knowledge has doubt, as such, this special and peculiar place. And therefore, before the intellectual solution comes, a deeper peace is reached than the mere intellect could find. The Godward significance of the disturbance, its place and function for the devotional attitude of the soul, this is primary. And even the intellectual solution should itself be reached through that very intensification

of experience which doubt provokes; for surely in such matters our intuition is ahead of our reason; and our special difficulties, just because they impinge upon the God-consciousness, stimulate it just in that precise direction in which their solutions are to be found. For by hypothesis we have that in God which avails for every need; and, if we could expect always to repel disturbing influences before they reached the centre where God indwells, there would be no meaning in our claim for spiritual experience that, by its own inherent resources, it is supreme in thought and life.

§ 12. *Social Aspect of Belief. The Broad Question*

Up to this point I have endeavoured to expound and defend a view of religious knowledge as being essentially personal and individual. But now comes the question: What is the relation between this personal knowledge and the formulated doctrine which expresses the belief of a religious society? It is no mere question whether belief *ought* to be social as well as individual: it actually is. And we have now to interpret that social element which is undoubtedly present in religious belief.

It seems desirable to approach this problem by way of a theory of knowledge which belongs in the sphere of philosophy to Absolute Idealism, and reappears in another form in Christian theology, when it makes the community rather than the individual the unit of cognition. A short quotation will show what this conception means in

philosophy: after which we shall be in a position to criticise it, and, in the course of our argument, to reach the element of truth that it contains. "The real presupposition of all knowledge," says the late Dr John Caird,[1] "or the thought which is the *prius* of all things, is not the individual's consciousness of himself as an individual, but a thought or self-consciousness which is beyond all individual selves. . . . When we are compelled to think of all existences as relative to thought, and of thought as prior to all, among the existences to which it is prior is our own individual self." We may take this sentence as expressing the fundamental position, from one point of view, of that Philosophy of the Absolute which, however strongly it may emphasise individual personality, denies it a proper existence, and so a proper cognitive standpoint, in its own right. But can this stepping out of our own cognitive centre to the absolute point of view be consistently justified? As philosophers we cannot take the step without first assenting to that conception of the absolute, and our relation to it, that demands this change of position. It is indeed for the purpose of showing us the absolute, as he conceives it, that Dr Caird invites us thus to "rise to a universal point of view," and leave our individuality behind. But we can only establish the validity of such a transition by presupposing that very theory of the absolute which he desires to justify. This transcending of self is to make us Monists; and yet we cannot take the step at all unless

[1] "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion," p. 149.

we are Monists first. But how can we become Monists first? We must certainly *start* with the antithesis between self and the universal spirit, because these are the terms of the predication upon which Monism rests. But, starting with it, we shall never transcend it; because this very acceptance of the universal mind, as containing the particular and absorbing its particularity, is itself the act of the particular mind, an act which implies that very independence which it is straining itself to surrender. The first step, then, in the process of conversion to Monism takes place from our own individual centre, and therefore tacitly accepts, even while it denies, the right of the individual to view reality from that centre.

But, it may be said, Caird appeals to thought as it is. Do we not, as a matter of fact, try to reach truth by eliminating the personal equation and adopting the standpoint of the larger mind? Undoubtedly we do, but not upon the basal plane of consciousness. The adoption of a universal, or social, standpoint must be justified, not assumed, by philosophy. The universality supposed to be found by the absorption of the intellect that seeks it is abstract and unreal. Relatively speaking, I may of course transcend my own individuality; but *it is I who do so*; and it is only in a relative sense that self can transcend self.

And when we come to the question of social authority in religion, the same remark holds good. Indeed, if we were to pass *per saltum* from the personal standpoint to that of the community, we should be running counter

to the whole trend of the preceding arguments. When the cognising Church first appears upon the stage of discussion, it appears as an object, not as a larger subject: In other words, its value is analogous to that of any other proof of religious truth. If our belief in God and in His relations with men is such as to lead us to expect a social revelation, then the phenomenon of the actually existing Church fills in what would otherwise be a gap. Though we may find great difficulty in defining, even very roughly, the nature and limits of Church authority, yet the very fact that the general body of formulated doctrine in which we believe does not come to us as mere individual opinion is helpful to us just in proportion as the consciousness of isolation would have caused misgiving. But until we have, from our own personal standpoint, fixed the position of a cognitive community in our scheme of truth, we cannot submit our own personal subjectivity to that of the Church: and still that same spiritual personality which stands at the beginning of thought as its initiation is also its final criterion and goal.

§ 13. *Epistemological Significance of the Church*

But now let us come a little closer to the problem in hand. All our knowledge, all our views about anything, are of course held by us as members of a social body. If our standard of truth has an ultimate reference to life, that reference is certainly not in the first instance merely to our own personal life, but to that of the community.

When, in our own thoughts, we give definite expression to our conclusions, we are treating ourselves as members of the community that uses such forms of self-expression: we are communicating to ourselves just as we might to others. And so our general view of things includes for each a view of himself as having a place in the general system—as being, from one point of view, part of that system. He does not merely share other people's opinions *ab extra*, for that would imply that those opinions were formed by him simply as an individual, antecedently to his membership of the social organism: rather, his adoption of their standpoint involves a recognition of the solidarity of his mind, in one aspect, with theirs. It is only in a relative sense that we feel our opinions to be individual. We may hold to an opinion though it is opposed to the convictions of most persons who are in a position to form a judgment on the matter in hand; but that is merely because we are conscious that the empirical community around us does but very imperfectly represent the normal social mind. "*Athanasius contra mundum*" —but only till the larger life of the Church reasserts itself; then will the persecuted thinker be remembered as the protagonist of true belief. Knowledge in general is inseparably associated with a knowledge of self as a member of a larger organism. When self-consciousness develops, it is true, that larger organism, as empirically known, is seen to afford no absolute standard of truth: but still it can never be left out of account: it has afforded to the self-conscious individual all the material for his

thought and the terms for its formulation: and if he declines to lose himself in it, that is only because it has trained him to see its own imperfections, and made him feel that it and he are members of a yet larger whole. It is still *as* a social being that he thinks. Just as his knowledge of the society as an object implies a knowledge of himself as part of that object, so the knowledge of himself as a thinking subject reveals that larger social subject whose thought contains his own.

The application of this principle to religious truth should be clear enough. What is it that, in our apprehension of formulated doctrines, corresponds to the general social body? If what we have urged in the course of these two chapters be true, then it seems to follow that the ordinary mind of humanity will not serve the purpose. For the Theistic world-view is, in its essence, antithetical to any other. It is to the self-conscious and independent personality as such that all new revelation is given. It is, conversely, the very fact of our personal God-consciousness that enables us, in any true sense, to rise above, and stand over against, the empirical community around us. But since this God-consciousness must necessarily formulate itself; and since, as we all know, formulated belief is essentially social, held by each as a member of the community; we seem absolutely to require a community on this higher plane, a society *in*, yet not merely *of*, the world, corresponding to that lower plane of social life above which we are raised by realisation of our heavenly citizenship.

It remains true that that inner centre of direct spiritual

communion from which our religious beliefs draw their vitality and upon which they react, must primarily belong to the person as such, and not even to this higher community. Even the doctrines themselves, considered as expressions of his spiritual life, belong to himself individually, and only *qua* formulated, to his social self. And, further, since the religious community, as he knows it directly and historically, is not the whole organism as it would appear *sub specie æternitatis*, it affords only a relatively valid norm of truth. Its authority may indeed, on central matters, be felt as very great, and indeed amply sufficient, but it can never be strictly absolute. Nor need it: for belief in the Church is itself but an element in the entire credal structure, which ultimately rests, or ought to rest, upon the deepest basis of personal life. Yet within these limits, the spiritual man lives and thinks as a member of a society, however little he may succeed in interpreting his own thought. Such appears to me to be the true epistemological significance of the Church. Instead of starting with the theoretical Whole, universal or ecclesiastical, to which the individual belongs, and viewing him simply in and through that Whole, how much better it is to start rather with the concrete individual as actually given. Thus, in seeking the meaning of his individuality, we discover the social life not as its superior category, but as its obverse.

As I am not dealing primarily with Christian dogmatics, there is no need further to develop the Christian doctrine of the Church. What I have said concerns the Church in

all its aspects—collective, organic, institutional. Again, I shall hardly be suspected of ignoring the sacred books which, without any conscious reference to church authority, are to many the sole source of appeal. For, as a simple matter of fact, those books come to us through the community; and in so far as our own consciousness does not directly ratify what they contain, we receive them by virtue of our membership, in the sense above defined, of a social whole, as we receive every sort of doctrine or opinion, considered as an object of reflective consciousness.

It is true that from one point of view the spiritual community merges with the general social life. As its feelings, habits, and ideals, both on the social plane and within each individual, are very largely involved in those of the world, so, in the matter of religious belief, we cannot draw a sharp line of demarcation between the two spheres. But this is only to say, as I have said already, that we cannot see the spiritual society *sub specie æternitatis*. It is only theoretically that we know it as an absolute and perfect entity. But though the exact course and clear-cut banks of the stream are hidden from us, we can trace the general position of the river-bed. Though the circumference is blurred, there is a relatively exact centre, where the spiritual man may find his focus, when he looks upon the things of God.

So then the religious community forms a necessary *tertium quid* between the pure subject and the pure object. And because the object is not a distant spiritual

sphere, but comprises the visible world; and still less is restricted to the visible and temporal: for the world in its deepest aspect is the outer ring of a spiritual universe centred in God: this community must belong, as it does by hypothesis belong, both to this world and to the next. It is known as earthly, because it first approaches us on the side of our senses and our understanding: it is known as spiritual, because it has its own place in the spiritual system which it reveals.

§ 14. *Relation of Historic Formulas to Restatements*

In considering the connection between spiritual experience and the doctrines which express it for reflection, one remark was reserved for this stage in our discussion. It is this. In observing the elasticity of the doctrines, as regards their form, an important qualification must be made. If the mind of the Church constitutes for the individual, saving his individual rights, the *prima facie* norm of truth, then those particular formulas which, as far as can be empirically ascertained, express that mind, must not be displaced, without very strong reason, by new modes of statement. I say must not be displaced, because the newer formulas may serve a most important function in mediating between spiritual experience and modern thought, so long as they do not claim a position of finality. They must coexist with the historic formulas. They are more in harmony, no doubt, with certain aspects of religious truth, on the one side, and with the results

attained by the modern mind on the other. But let it be noted that, on the other hand, the historic formulas at least claim a certain superhistorical position. If indeed they express the eternal mind of the Church, which is itself nothing else than humanity realising its own meaning and destiny, then all the artificiality in them must be regarded as formal, and the truth as substantial. And this will be not only a matter of common belief, but of vivid feeling, to all those for whom its central formulas are the most direct expression of the individual God-consciousness, and in whom the realisation of social life is a deep-lying and instinctive tendency. In trying to understand the distinction between incidental and essential truth or error, we adopted as a criterion the interests of the central spiritual personality. Here we apply the same criterion on the social plane, but with a difference. However a man's erroneous opinions—judged as such objectively—may convey truth far more important for himself than the error, still it must always be his aim to reach objective truth—that is to say, views which are essentially true for the community as well as for himself.

Obviously the subjective criterion, which applies to our opinions in their aspect as embodied experiences, must not be relied on, except by way of ultimate verification, in the process of formulation. And that we should formulate them, or accept formulation for them, is necessary to their very life, even as experiences. Clearly then we must have an objective criterion to guide us. And just within that sphere where the individual

mind sees and thinks through and in the larger social mind, it adopts the objective social standard whereby to judge of the essential truth of any article of faith. Now, according to the foregoing argument, this standpoint, and so the standard which it affords, is not strictly absolute. But it is—to use a phrase which, however paradoxical, seems to me quite a sound one—relatively absolute. It is absolute as against the fluctuating restatements which, born of temporary necessities, are satisfactory only in reference to the particular intellectual context for which they are formed: it is relative as against the criterion afforded by that highest—or deepest—category, as I believe it to be, the category of personality.

§ 15. *Justification of this Introduction of the Theological Idea of a Divine Society*

It may perhaps be objected to these remarks about the cognitive Church, that a great deal of definite Christian dogma is assumed, and that such an assumption would be more suitable in a treatise on systematic theology than in one which deals with the foundations of Theistic faith. But such an objection would rest upon a great misunderstanding. Let us look back for a moment to the starting-point of our discussion.

Instead of working, like the Idealistic theologians, from abstract data, we posited as the outset the fullest concept of a concrete personal God: not, indeed, defining

closely what such a concept connotes, because it was not the idea *per se* that concerned us, but the object of faith —of positive and interested, even though halting, faith— in any given individual. We might, as before remarked, have posited some creed short of the fullest Christian Theism: but this course was not taken; firstly, because the present writer feels primary concern for those who are groping their way to what he holds to be the true and final creed; secondly, because that creed contains the fullest resources to meet the various difficulties that arise in the course of the exposition. All doctrines, if our position is sound, are, when considered as the work of reason, really defensive rather than constructive. And in this manner we have employed the doctrine of the Church. It simply meets such objections or misgivings as to Intuitive Theism as may arise from the sharp antithesis between the pure object and the pure subject. It is required, in fact, to complete what was said previously as to the position occupied by the logical understanding. And again, the doctrine of the Church, when interpreted as above, meets any complaint against Intuitivism to the effect that its individualistic basis is inconsistent with the actual facts of religious life. It is, therefore, as it has been here used, a defensive hypothesis. The positive character which it presents is, on our theory, due to the expansion of the Theistic experience over the ground which it has cleared. I need not dwell longer on this point, since it must be plain to all who have followed the drift of these two chapters.

§ 16. *Intuitivism and the Secular World-View*

But it may be well, in closing this chapter, to repeat explicitly what has been indicated in the course of the argument—namely, the true attitude of Intuitivism towards the secular world-view. If indeed the God-experience is the implicit presupposition and ground of all thought, then for the ideal man, who has realised the meaning of self and of life, all things would be seen in the light of God and eternity. On the other hand, the world-view of ordinary persons, to whom the religious point of view is not even primary, must be not merely defective, but at its centre positively, if latently, irreligious. For Intuitivism there is no merely negative secularity. Now reason cannot supply the materials of a Theistic philosophy, but it can remove the anti-Theistic assumptions, latent or explicit, that inhibit the direct apprehension of God: and it can indicate the manner of life which will set free that apprehension, and enable it, in its own right and by its own inherent power, to dominate the entire mind. In thus trying to fix the true significance of Theistic speculation, I must not be thought to undervalue it. Relatively to the secular plane, speculative theology is undoubtedly constructive: only, I would earnestly maintain, reason when thus employed can only clear the way for the emergence or expansion of suppressed experience.

And if cognitive experience is fundamental for the

theory of knowledge, its object—namely, concrete being —is fundamental for the theory of reality. And nothing is fully concrete that is viewed apart from its logical presuppositions; not even finite personality; for the finite person, while on one side he transcends the universe, on the other side is rooted in it. God only is fully concrete: God is known in an experience of which all other experiences are but hints and phases. So in knowing God, we know and possess all things; but first ourselves. "He that is spiritual," says the greatest and sanest of the mystics, "judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man."

CHAPTER IV

GOD, THE WORLD, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

§ 1. *The Kind of Absolutism that our Intuitivism involves*

In the last chapter a plea was put in for the supremacy and implicit comprehensiveness of spiritual knowledge. This means also that the object of this knowledge (that is, God, together with the world spiritually regarded) is the supreme object of knowledge as such; in the sense that the Godward attitude of mind is that in which reality is to be understood. This is not the same as to assert one supreme unitary absolute of which the divers realities of our experience are but phases. Such teaching has an account yet to settle with those who demand just recognition of individual persons, and who believe that the objectivity of evil is a necessary presupposition of the moral sense. But very different is the thesis here maintained. It posits, not an absolute idea, but an absolute mental attitude with its corresponding object—an attitude which is not merely intellectual, but personal in the fullest sense. From this point of view it is not required that God shall be reached merely as the highest category; but that the cognition of God shall be a starting-point,

and the world interpreted in terms of God. This will be further worked out in the course of our discussion.

§ 2. *The One and the Many*

Now if what has been already maintained is true, it appears that the apprehension of God is connected with self-consciousness in a peculiarly intimate manner. For it was on the very basis of personal and individual life that we sought to establish the validity of the God-consciousness. This gives us two points of departure in our consideration of the primary content of belief. In the next chapter we shall take our start from personality and self-consciousness. In this chapter we start from the idea of God and of His relation to the individual and the world.

For this purpose we must first take up the thread of the remarks offered on the subject of Rationalism. If to some extent we are led over old ground, this, I hope, will be excused. The subject will be viewed somewhat in a new light, so that we may effect a transition from the theory of religious knowledge to its subject-matter,—from the *grounds* of belief to its primary *content* as brought into line with the necessities of pure reason.

Let us state our problem in terms of the One and the Many. On the one hand we have the world of experience, with indefinitely varied data, the vast kaleidoscope of sense-perception, taken up into the still manifold categories of the mind. On the other hand—what? Here

the Absolute Idealist provides his absolute, his " world of appreciation " or of " meaning," that reality of which all appearances are appearances, the unity which exists beneath the differences, the One which is the very implication of the Many. But while the Many are anchored to sense-perception, the One, if we insist on stopping short of Mysticism, is mediated by reflection. It is the property of the philosopher. But if we do not stop short of Mysticism—if we do cross the line that divides the mere assent to logical conclusions from a deliberate acceptance of the immediacy of the spiritual vision—then we must go further still. The call to the inner chamber is a call to see the world from a higher standpoint. The chamber is not windowless, but commands a lofty view of the landscape on every side. Every form of Theism has its cosmology, not brought to it from without, but implicit, at least, in its very idea of God. The consciousness of God leads us to a world-view as truly immediate—to say no more—as that given us by common sense; only whereas common sense gives at most only the One in the Many, the direct Theistic vision gives us the Many in the One.

§ 3. *The One and the Many in Intuitional Realism*

Now let it be noticed at the outset that the problem leads us at once up to the issues of Idealism. Intuitionally, Monism is in fact a contradiction. The proposition that the Many are One—in the sense that in final truth they

are not also many—is refuted by the mere statement of it. But if we mean that the Many are *also* One, then this objection does not arise. It is only to say that the intuition which gives us the knowledge of the Many is also implicitly an intuition of the One—that is to say, reality is given to us in experience as a unit no less than as a plurality : only we must do justice to the two-sidedness of the experience : a mere pluralism would rest on a false abstraction. And this, as will appear later, seems to me true not only *ad hominem*, but, as far as it goes, absolutely. To say that the One contains the Many raises the question : Whence do the Many come at all ? Surely, from this point of view, they can only be given in intuition ; and, if so, their position is as fundamental as that of the One. If it is fundamental that the One should contain them, then that is simply to say that they and it are equally fundamental. In short, from this point of view, if we are to have a One—a principle of unity as well as of plurality—we cannot make either secondary to the other.

§ 4. *The One and the Many in Idealism*

A more subtle question is that raised by modern Idealism. Our plurality now consists merely of phenomena, not of objects posited as such at the outset : the Many are appearances of the One. So at least if the theory is consistent. But it seems difficult for it to be consistent. For phenomena in their psychological

aspect are obviously irrelevant for the purpose. They must be not merely φανήσεις (facts of appearing) but literally φαινόμενα (things appearing). But that would mean that there is a plurality of *objects* between the appearance and the One.[1] Idealism would subject them to a logical reinterpretation in order to present them as phenomena of the absolute, or the One. But logic can only deal with concepts, and cannot get at the actual given individuals. We may elaborate a theory of individuality, and make it the very keystone even of a Monistic system, but that will not avail us. What we have to take account of is not a mere principle of individuality, but this, that, and the other, given individuals. Either they are objects, given as such—objects appearing; and their plurality is, in this aspect, ultimate; or they are mere facts of appearing. But in that case what appears? Not certainly the absolute—regarded as One—for that is just what we have to get at. If the One appeared in them, we should necessarily see it in them; for the correlative of appearance is perception. But this is certainly not so; and if it did appear in them, it would be divided up among them, and would not be a mere One, but, just as fundamentally, a Many. The fact is that the plurality, if once allowed a standing-ground beyond mere sensation—once allowed to exist *for* the percipient—refuses to be superseded.

And so we are brought back to the position as it was

[1] Just as Kant's phenomena, though distinguished from the "thing in itself," come to be handled as objects *per se*.

before Idealism came to our succour. If the individual existents—as they appear to common-sense—are phenomena of one reality, which is more truly one than many, then they belie it: but that is a contradiction in terms. For errors of judgment are here outside the question. Illusiveness cannot be a predicate of appearances as such. If again, they are strictly *φαινόμενα*, and not merely *τὸ ἓν φαινόμενον*, then their plurality, being a datum of experience, must remain to the end. Or to put it thus: if in climbing to the absolute through the manifold of common sense, we let drop the ladder, how shall we make our way back again? Yet so we must; for otherwise the common sense world—from which we cannot escape—severed from the absolute, must objectify itself on its own account; and to allow this would be to surrender everything. The old illustration of the lion's den, applied first to Spinoza, suggests itself: footsteps may be traced converging towards the den, but none radiating from it.

§ 5. *The One and the Many from the Standpoint of this Treatise*

Now this view which I have offered for my reader's acceptance, seems to follow also from the type of Theistic belief expounded in the first two chapters. We no more start from the One alone than from the Many alone. The perception of one concrete Being, not merely read into the plural world, however validly, but—conversely—the

interpretation of the plural world, must be held to be implicit, in a more or less degree, in every religious mind. We can now work in both directions. Unlike the Idealist, we can reverse our engines.

§6. *The "Immanence of God." Defects of the Phrase*

Among the most familiar phrases of Theistic philosophy the "Immanence of God" stands out as having served the useful purpose of mediating between Pantheism and Deism. But from our present point of view we are able to criticise it and to offer a warning to those who might be disposed to rely upon it as a final resting-place of thought. At the outset it is clear that the expression is a physical metaphor. It serves the provisional and negative purpose of barring out wrong ideas that enter from opposite directions. Its failure is, to put it shortly, that from one point of view it is too Pantheistic, and from another not Pantheistic enough. On the one hand, it tends to negate personality. Not that it is necessarily intended to convey the whole truth: the transcendence of God is supposed to be complementary to His immanence. But unfortunately the word "immanence" itself presupposes the independent existence of that which is immanent, and therefore has a tendency to contradict or obscure transcendence. The term is predicated of God Himself, who is personal, and personality as such is essentially transcendent, and can only be understood in terms of reciprocity and intercourse. It may be said that we find

approximations to immanence when we consider the spiritual relations of man, and that we may therefore apply the idea in a fuller sense to the infinite and perfect Being who is their Creator. But, on the other hand, it is just because a human being is finite that his spirit, or his ideas, or his influence, may be regarded in a sort of relative abstraction from his personality, and so in some sense as immanent in others. Individualities are external to one another. Although, therefore, the positive meaning of the term " immanence " may apply in a special manner to God, the negative implication is all the more entirely and clearly inapplicable.

On the other hand, the phrase under consideration is also not Pantheistic enough. For it accepts the world as an existent antecedently to God being " in " it. Setting aside for the present those considerations which secure the independent reality of our personalities, it is plain that, as far as the universe expresses God's presence, its very being is given as embraced in His, and He is the very meaning of its phenomena. We feel this when we are conscious of God in nature, also when we accept the events of life as His dealings with us. It is impossible to think of the Divine presence as shining, so to speak, through a semi-transparent medium—through a substance which is not within His own substance. The world may be regarded, by a fair metaphor, as the prism which explicates the glory of God; because the prism merely breaks up the colours that are implicit in the light. But we must beware of regarding it as a " dome of many-coloured

glass" which "stains the white radiance of eternity"; if we mean that the glass, not the radiance beyond it, provides the colour and the design. Whereas if God is *in* the phenomenal world, He must be in the variety as such, not merely behind it—that is, He must be not so much in it, as it in Him.

We need to pass, as it were, through a certain provisional Acosmism to reach God, and then receive the cosmos back from the standpoint of His eternity. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new." This is because, as we have seen before, the cosmos which exists for us in so far as we are not religious persons is wrong at the centre. It needs to be readjusted as a whole around the supreme intuition of God.

§ 7. *Two Aspects of the Direct Contemplation of God*

Still, however, there remains another aspect of our cosmology which it is most important to take into account. What has just been said in criticism of the idea of immanence would, taken by itself, be a plain submission to Monism, after all that I have pleaded in favour of a real plurality. But, before proceeding to this, let us definitely place on the same side these two ideas which have already emerged. These ideas both relate to the direct contemplation of God, and present that contemplation as of two sorts, both of them direct and mystical. In the one case, we abstract from nature altogether, and

fix our minds upon the pure centre of white light, where God reveals Himself in Himself. In the other, we abstract, not from nature, but from every aspect of nature but that which conveys to the soul an inarticulate experience of God. In this latter case we include the entire range of our environment, considered as an expression of the Divine presence and activity. We may speak of the knowledge of God as mediated by nature and the events of life: but within the experience itself they are direct phenomena of God: all accompanying consciousness of their scientific or common sense aspect is merely incidental.

§ 8. *The Attitude of free Activity: not Godward*

Both these two modes of regarding God in His direct relation to ourselves are included in that worship-attitude which has been referred to in the preceding chapter, when it was maintained that the essential truth of all doctrines is to be judged by their value as expressions of, and as food for, our own spiritual experience. And now, as against these two moments of the worship-attitude, we must set another attitude, also corresponding to an aspect of God in relation to the world—namely, the attitude of free activity. Now that most important view of the world in which it is given us as the field of our service of God, the material upon which the Spirit of God works—and we with Him—that He may reconcile it to its Creator, cannot be thought of in connection with the Divine immanence. In this reference also the phrase is open to objection as

Pantheistic, if we press it beyond its narrow and relative significance. For here there is no sort of identification, but the sharp antithesis of subject and object. Whether we regard the initial purpose of God for the world's amendment and reconciliation, or the resistance which is in part the response, or the reconciliation, where and when it is effected, still this antithesis or reciprocity remains.

Even here, however, it might seem that the idea of immanence enters. For the spiritual mind sees even in the most imperfect humanity the Divine image: and Christ has said that those who do good to the least of His disciples do it unto Himself. In other words, God, it may be said, is immanent in men, and that is just the reason why we are to love men and seek to do them good. Yet note the following considerations. In the first place, as regards the end: so far as we seek to promote their moral and spiritual welfare, our minds are fixed upon the *contrast* between the image and the Model; and so likewise the mind of God, whom we think of as working for that same end for which we are working. God's identification of Himself with His creatures, since it is His love for them in its highest expression, and love implies personal distinction and relationship, cannot be brought within the conception of immanence. This latter point applies also to all effort to promote well-being, not only in moral and spiritual matters. In the second place, as regards the means: we are confronted throughout life by opposing forces, either the direct antagonism of other men, or at least the *vis inertiæ* of an imperfect state of society, not

ideally adapted to the promotion of good ends. From the "immanence" point of view all these influences may be regarded as a Divine discipline, and so we may see God *in* them. But the fact remains that in themselves they are objects of resistance; and the attitude of resistance which we present to them is not a Godward attitude. And if we regard God as identifying Himself with us in the conflict, we cannot at the same time think of Him as immanent in the opposing forces.

§ 9. *In respect of the Active Life, God is "immanent" in the Worker*

But here we must notice that while in the active life, considered as a carrying out of the Divine purpose, the individual cannot think of God as immanent in the world, it is, on the other hand, just in this connection that the highest spiritual feeling reveals Him as immanent in the worker himself. Nay, more than immanent, on the same principle that led us to discard the term as inadequate to express the relation of God to nature. Once more we may appeal to the profound mystical intuition of St Paul. His paradox, "I live, yet not I: Christ liveth in me," expresses just that merging of self into the Divine which, in this particular aspect, seems to me nothing less than ontological truth. If God uses the surrendered soul, not merely as one man may employ another, but in respect of its very deepest springs of will and emotion, then this means that the entire life of service—that is to say, the

whole life considered as surrendered to God—is fundamentally God's life and activity. From this point of view the soul may be regarded, in a thoroughly Monistic manner, as a phase of the Divine being. Its life being identified with His life, there is no residuum in which a separate selfhood could appear. The distinct centre of will, desire, and knowledge is here transcended: having exhausted its full and final expression in the act of self-surrender, it cannot be traced within the sphere of the surrendered life.

§ 10. *Different Relations to God in respect of Work and in respect of Worship*

Now the opposite to this is the attitude, or standpoint, of worship. This, so far as it regards natural events and phenomena, regards them as the direct self-expression of God; while on the other hand it emphasises the antithesis of the Divine Spirit and that of the worshipper, as against the "immanence" of either in the other. In the former case, the soul, as in God and having God in it, stands over against the world; in the latter, the soul, in the reciprocity of spiritual communion, faces God—and the world only as in God. When we would take to heart the meaning and purpose of our lives, when we would draw motive and courage for the fulfilment of our mission; when we would subdue pride and self-confidence; when we would feel the littleness of earthly life when lived for its own sake, and its infinite value in relation to eternal reality—then it is

that we need to see self in that inclusion in God wherein it is related to the world on the basis of His relations. And when, on the other hand, in the unfilled abyss of our personality, we feel the yearning for a deeper communion than the world life can afford; when we seek to live in personal communion with God, the very environment of the spiritual organism; when we reach out for that which we have not in ourselves, but is necessary for sustenance, guidance, and renewal—then it is that the contrast, the antithesis, the reciprocity, between the soul and its Creator, is all-significant. Everything, indeed, which comes within the sphere of personal relationship — duty, love, sympathy, companionship, succour — is inseparable from this duality, and would be lost in an all-absorbing absolute Spirit. And at the same time, for the worship attitude *as such*, the world has no existence independent of God. Not only is its beauty His beauty, its love His love, but its events are His acts. For it is an attitude of innermost dependence, a consciousness of being embraced by a Reality that only allows the finite realities of earthly life to reach us as its own self-expression. If the circle is broken at any one point, then this contact of the Divine Spirit becomes simply an empirical fact among other facts of ordinary life. That which holds the absolute centre necessarily dominates the entire range. Innocent joys of every kind become thus the direct expression of eternal Love; sorrows are a discipline from the hands of that same Love, which endures what it inflicts. In this attitude of mind we are conscious indeed of our activities—con-

scious of them as directed towards God, whether for good or as sins to be repented of; but the whole unbroken circle of the not-self is the encompassing presence of God. This is not to forget that the Divine activity, as directed towards the individual, is conditioned by that element of resistance in the world, the explicit recognition of which is a presupposition of the active life. But, however conditioned, it is none the less direct. Objectively determined as to form and occasion, it is not therefore subjectively mediated. It presents itself for our direct apprehension none the less because of these conditions, and because we imperfectly understand them.

§ 11. *These two Sides of the Idea of God equally fundamental*

And so it appears, in short, that the true meaning of spiritual life—and so of all human life; for the natural man must be explained through the spiritual—is to be found in a relation to God and the world which is irreducibly two-sided. It seems to me that we do well to take this definitely into account, and that no mixing up or compromise of "immanence" and "transcendence" can afford the basis for a true and consistent Theism. On the one side there is absolute inclusion and continuity: on the other, a ground-principle of interaction. And this two-sided idea of God is reached by no remote theorising, no attempt to jump away from one's own shadow: but forms itself on the very spot where the individual

stands when philosophy finds him, and is rooted in the very ground of his self-consciousness.

§ 12. *Unity of the Religious Life, though thus two-sided*

It is hardly necessary to show at length how these two moments of the religious life act and react on each other. That recognition of selfhood which is involved in personal communion with the Divine personality depends for its very meaning and maintenance on that world-life wherein our own individuality sustains itself and grows by social intercourse. For, without reference to the world-life, union with God becomes abstract and devoid of content, and there is a tendency to that craving for absorption into His essence which is the great characteristic of an ill-balanced mysticism. True Christian worship is not mere contemplation, but specific prayer and thanksgiving. It enters as an item, albeit the supreme item, in the whole life of the devout person. And the whole life likewise is taken up into worship.

§ 13. *The Inconsistency in Abstract Mysticism*

Now it may help us to consider in this connection wherein lies the fallacy of that type of Mysticism of which the higher Hinduism presents so complete an example. It seems to lie in this: that one identical condition of the soul—namely, oneness with the All-soul—is at the same time, by hypothesis, actual, and yet an ideal to be attained.

There is thus a discrepancy between the experience regarded from without, and the experience regarded from within. From without, this self-identification with Brahma is an ideal to be pursued, just as any other ideal may be pursued, by study, self-discipline, and any other methods, all which in themselves belong to the plane of ordinary empirical life, though they are designed to lead us off that plane. But from within the experience, the identification is actual. The soul, in order to become one with the universal Soul, has to assume that it is one already. Now to explain this by saying that the soul has only to realise or actualise what is the abiding and essential fact all along is a resource not available from the standpoint of ecstatic Mysticism. For the soul that has thus to enter into the mystical union, as distinguished from the soul regarded as eternally in possession of it, would be the merely empirical person, who, just because separate, has no share in the existence of the All, and so is non-existent, and therefore can neither be merged nor extinguished. Thus appears a hopeless discrepancy between the ordinary or empirical self, and the self regarded *sub specie æternitatis*, a discrepancy which cannot be got over, since both the discrepant elements are necessary. Ignore the distinction between the true and the empirical self, and the universality of the all-soul becomes purely actual, a mere glorification of the *status quo*, not an ideal; for there is nothing to which it can stand as an ideal. Maintain the distinction, and it becomes an impassable gulf: because the self-development of an unreal self is an unreal

process and cannot carry it over into the real.[1] It is in fact an attempt to accomplish what is by hypothesis an eternal fact.

§ 14. *The two Aspects of our Selfhood, as of the Idea of God, are organically connected*

But for true Christian Mysticism, these two aspects of selfhood, the Godward and the empirical, presuppose one another. The communion with God is essentially personal, and is so just because it is the communion of an active and working individual, whose activity, and all associated with it, is a common interest between itself and Him with whom it communes. And furthermore, the work and the worship have reference to other finite personalities, with different characteristics and different needs. The individual, knowing, through his world-life, himself as a fellow-member with them of the social body, and at the same time realising the love of God through self-identification with God in His work of love for them, maintains thus his own consciousness of being an object of that same love.

And so, conversely, the life of activity presupposes the Godward attitude of direct communion. Just as the world-life keeps the individual self from absorption into the Divine, so the Godward life keeps it from being lost in the community. The consciousness of literal oneness with God, which we have seen to be implied in the empirical

[1] See Royce, "The Word and the Individual," vol. i. lect. 5.

attitude, is meaningless if it merely rests on a general recognition of His presence in the worker and in the work. Its very meaning is: God with *me*—with me not merely because I am an item of humanity, but precisely in this very position of antithesis and reciprocity in which I stand to the world, as living His life on its behalf—that position for which the world—in part as the object of my remedial efforts and in part as the principle of opposition to them—stands *over against* me. The attitude of mind which sets self and God on the one hand and the world on the other obviously presupposes a union of self with God unmediated by the world or by anything in it.

§ 15. *Summary. The two Aspects of God's Relation to the World*

And so, to sum up, the religious consciousness, taken up into reflection, discloses two standpoints, wherein is given to us a twofold revelation of God. In the one, the finite individual, confronting the empirical world, knows himself as one with God, and God as, in like manner, confronting the world. In the other, the same individual, standing face to face not with the world but with God, knows the world as one with God and self as distinct from Him. This does not mean that we can always exactly discriminate two entirely different and alternating *states*; though we can to a great extent. It cannot be pretended that the analysis here given is purely psychological, and simply descriptive of the actual facts as they appear on

the surface. If this were so, then it could be a secret to no one; and every devout person would be an exact philosopher. But it is here claimed that these two moments of the higher life are necessary points of departure, when once we bring reflection to bear upon our religious intuitions. They are an explication of the real import and actual tendency of all religious thought and life. And they do really correspond, broadly but distinctly, to the two recognised main divisions of the life of faith.

And I think that the frank acceptance of this final distinction is alone able to prevent that hopeless disintegration of personal religion, that loss of intensity and coherence which, now that old symbols are losing their power, is so manifest all around us. The rival claims of ideas that equally call for recognition—human freedom and Divine providence, God *in* the world and *for* the world, in the soul and for the soul, the duty of unreserved service of others and the duty of spiritual self-culture—all such antinomies are not merely theoretical, but cry for solution at the peril of spiritual stultification. And without considering them separately I would suggest that they be dealt with, not by allowing each side to impinge upon and weaken the other, but by carrying them down to the parallel lines of this ultimate reciprocity, where they are seen not as contradictions, but as correlative aspects of reality.

The mere "balance of truth" cannot any longer be a final goal for theology. The oppositions of doctrines must

be resolved by finding out how each of the seemingly opposed ideas requires and refers us to the other. And we can escape the dilemma of one-sidedness on the one hand and incoherence on the other, only by carrying this principle down to the very foundation of the God-consciousness.

§ 16. *The Personal Equation. Weakness of Monistic Idealism*

Let us now stand back a little and see how our general result converges with the position maintained in the two preceding chapters. In the first it was submitted that experience is not as such a constant element in knowledge, but has a principle of development and of coherent diversity, not owed to thought, but belonging to itself. Now at this point we may observe how this line of reasoning leads to just that recognition of the significance of individuality which has been reached by another path in our discussion of the One and the Many. Our position, be it observed, is as far removed from that of the merely empirical Pluralists as it is from Idealistic Monism. But we shall best get at the required point of contact between our two lines of reasoning by contrasting these conclusions with Idealism. What is the attitude that Idealism, considered as a theory of knowledge, is obliged to adopt towards the individual? If the synthesis of our experiential data is to be assigned to thought alone, then the individual thinker, as thinking those particular thoughts in that particular context of thought and life,

is a mere irrelevance. The personal equation is, and must be, eliminated. That, from one point of view, is why Idealism has such difficulties with the individual and generally tends towards a Monism which, at best, tries to include the *principle* of individuality, but fails to help each individual to see the eternal significance of his own inward personal selfhood, as distinguished from that of other persons. This is only to say that it does not bring him into direct relations with a concrete Being who is the inner meaning, not only of the universe and *therefore* of the individual himself, but immediately of both. For this school of thought it is absolutely necessary to eliminate the personal equation. And yet this elimination is, at any rate, quite contrary to Theistic intuition. The only sort of religious Intuitivism that is not fundamentally individualistic is that of the Anabaptist prophet, or his like, who claims for his own spiritual insight a dogmatic authority over the intellects and consciences of other people—who claims that his own cognitive centre is the absolute and objective centre. But sound Intuitivism—by which I mean not only the Intuitivism which understands itself, but that which is implicit in all genuine religious life—is the knowledge of God precisely as related to the particular self, unmediated by the community or the universe. Thus the particular selfhood has not to be transcended in order to reach God: for the meaning of its own particularity, limitations and all, is implicated in its experience of God. This follows necessarily if we adhere to the absoluteness which is of the essence of

intuition, and at the same time allow to the rational side of our nature, and to other individuals, the fullest consideration and justice. The mystical fanatic is not individualistic enough. The very modesty of the Rational Intuitivist, so far from being a compromise, is only the fullest logical assertion of his claims. For he reaches the eternal standpoint, not by trying to transcend the actual concrete everyday life from which he starts—the particular place which he holds as one among others in a system of individuals—but by taking it all up with him, as it were, in his ascent, and so knowing himself, just as he is, in God. The deepest individualism, therefore, does not require a recognition of the community to balance it, but actually involves this recognition. The most thoroughgoing Mysticism embraces and consecrates the activities of daily life.

If the individual, in the sphere of first principles, is to abstract from his own individuality, as he finds it given him, here and now, at the outset of his philosophic inquiry, then clearly he cannot allow to himself, as an individual, any direct relations with any sort of " absolute."

§ 17. *Failure of both Monistic and Pluralistic Idealism to give the Individual true cosmic Relations*

Neither in the case of Pluralistic Idealism has the individual any true cosmic relations. For in this theory the absolute is only a system; and God, if He exist at all, can hardly be more than a *primus inter pares*.

So whereas in the former case the individual is absorbed by the cosmos, in this case the cosmos has no centre of concrete and unitary reality, answering to his own personal and social self. It cannot in either case mediate between him and the indefinite plurality of being around him; because, in the one, it does not gather up that plurality at all, and in the other it gathers him up with it. And this is the very death of religion. For again it must be insisted that the object of religious faith must come between the individual and his empirical world-life. Philosophy itself, for him, belongs to the world-life; for his pursuit of it is but one element among others in that life, and is conditioned by its circumstances. Thus for the intellectual absolutist, the absolute is locked up within the contingent, and there is an irremediable discrepancy between the standpoint of the philosopher as such and the standpoint of the integral person.

§ 18. *The Personal Equation, on the Basis of Cosmic Experience*

But if we take the experiential line, as expounded in this and the preceding chapters, the case is different. The unfolding of the actual experience in correlation with the activity of thought has necessarily a two-sided significance. It is significant not only as to the nature of the object in itself, but equally as to the time, circumstances, and manner, of its becoming known in the particular case. If indeed our experience as a whole

presents to us a universe in which we ourselves are items, and which we must recognise as indefinitely richer in itself than as known to us, then among the facts about this universe which are made known to us in experience is the fact that it presents to our own consciousness just those aspects that it does present. God comes to us in our experience primarily as related to ourselves. In the very substance of the truth made known to us by the inner witness of the Spirit is comprised the fact that there *is* this inner witness.

The elimination of the personal equation can only be approximately effected in the case of many studies in which it is specially desirable. And it is only the abstract character of scientific facts that renders it at all possible. In mathematics, we may suppose, it is simple enough. So for this very reason, when we come to a subject like religious philosophy, which sweeps the outer circle of these abstractions—a subject which relates the ultimate reality to the whole range of ordinary personal life—this elimination is necessarily impossible. Such philosophy must be prepared to incorporate that which it cannot eliminate. It must so interpret Being that the antithesis between our own point of view and the absolute point of view is transcended. Self-knowledge and the knowledge of God must be one. And this is accomplished by the frank acceptance of the God-consciousness with its implication of the eternal significance of our own finite lives.

§ 19. *The Divine Significance of all Life*

And so we may see the significance of the secular life in the light of eternity. The theory upon which monasticism rests may be discarded in the light of the deeper self-consciousness. We see no need now to force the daily life into an outwardly religious mould, or to minimise the time and interest devoted to anything but direct contemplation of eternal things. For the whole empirical life is seen in an organic unity, and the immediately spiritual self which is at the centre of this unity thrives not by isolation but by cultivating the whole circle of its relationships. Nothing can be spared that enlarges the content of our experience of God, by extending our knowledge of that universe of varied excellencies which are " broken lights " of Him. Well are we exhorted to think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report ; " if there be any virtue and if there be any praise." For when we admire these things we admire them for their distant approach to an ideal that, though unrecognised, is latent in our minds, latent partly for the very reason that it is so imperfectly revealed in the actual. So to see the ideal in the actual—as we all do when we admire—must tend to deepen and enrich whatever direct communion with the ideal in itself we already possess. But this ideal with which we can hold communion, and the love of which is presupposed in all our appreciation of beauty and moral goodness, is itself an actual : in other words, it is God.

But then there are the difficulties, the perils, the obstacles, of the daily life. There is, first, intellectual difficulty, which we have already considered. Then there are the interests that seem to rival our interest in God: there are the things which draw on the reserve of emotion and leave us dry for higher things, the deadening absorption in drudgery, and the perhaps more deadening routine of religious work that so easily becomes mechanical. These things too are "means of grace"—just because they are obstacles. For if—to use the current phrases—some things in life convey to our minds the "immanence" of God, other things throw us back upon the recognition of His "transcendence." Now so long as we keep a firm hold of the Divine significance of our selfhood and of life as such, then these very jarring elements serve their purpose in revealing God. For they drive us inward, as it were, upon that central and organic conception of life which can only be understood with reference to the unifying Divine purpose and to that communion with the transcendent Divine personality which is the centre of all knowledge. They make impossible that Pantheistic diffusion of deity which is the negation of its personality, and ultimately of its reality. The spiritual man, face to face with these elements as they present themselves, is driven back by them upon God. Inimical as they appear when regarded in reference to their immediate context in his life, they change their character at once when they call out the deeper resources of the central self. All opportunities in the spiritual life are dangers: but all dangers are opportunities.

And this is more than to say that difficulties as such are a beneficial discipline. It means that each particular jarring circumstance, as distinguished from others that might conceivably have been present, has its own meaning in reference to the Divine purpose. This follows from all that has been said. For just as it is not the generic individual, but our own specific individuality, that is, for each of us, the recipient of the inward revelation, and to which the content of that revelation primarily relates, so it is not the mere fact of difficulty and discipline in life that faith must recognise, but that each untoward event or circumstance has its specific significance in the working out of God's purpose for the individual. It matters not that we cannot always trace this significance, even in later days. The point is that if God is to be known at the centre of our lives He must be recognised in the circumference :—that, however strictly, in one aspect, its events may be regarded as implicated in a system of universal law, they are yet, in another, the immediate working of God in relation to each particular individual of His creation. This opens a large question, which cannot here be entered into. But to avoid misunderstanding, I should like to remark that just because the Many cannot be simply resolved into the One, so the evolutionary explanation of the world, interpreting as it does the complex by the simple, cannot present more than one aspect of the truth. In the experience of any given individual (and this experience, as we have seen, cannot be transcended) every element enters as distinct and fraught

with individual meaning. He may, as a philosopher or scientist, see unity in them; but his character as philosopher or scientist is but a phase in the complex total of his personal life. But when, as a religious man, he sees a unity in this diversity, then the unity is that of his own integral selfhood, seen in the light of the purpose and interest of its Creator; and thus it depends on the recognition that just precisely those particular experiences that have entered into his life have been selected and controlled in accordance with that purpose.

So is the earthly citizenship taken up into the heavenly; for the heavenly is the inner meaning of the earthly. And the same faith that sees the life of earth gilded with some of the glory of the world to come, can look forward to that world, not as to an abysmal Nirvâna, but as to a "new earth," taking into itself the reality, the vividness, and the diversity of the old that is to pass away.

CHAPTER V

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND CREATION

INSTEAD of taking up the argument where we left it at the end of the last chapter, let us now start from a different point and work our way towards conclusions which may supplement and confirm those already reached. A few remarks on the difficult subject of self-consciousness will, it is hoped, further elucidate the question of the relation of our being to that of God, and also help us to understand a little better the import and validity of one great Theistic conception to which philosophy has done scant justice.

§ 1. *Two Imperfect Ways of regarding Self-Consciousness*

(1) *As Reflection, or Introspection*

There are two symbolic modes of expressing what is meant by self-consciousness, both which, being really no more than physical metaphors, must be used with great caution, and have no claim to be regarded as a solution of the problem. There is firstly the idea of reflection, or the bending back of the Ego upon itself. This implies that the Ego, looking away from the outer world, turns

inward and so gains a direct view of itself in abstraction from the world of which it is a member. The metaphor depends upon a sharp line of demarcation between outer and inner experience. This distinction, unlike that of subject and object, receives compromising assistance from a physical category. The cognition of our own selfhood, obtained by thus isolating it from the whole of which it is a member leads to the self-hypnotism of the Indian devotee, the killing of thought by thought. More will be said on this point in a moment.

§ 2. (2) *Self-Consciousness as a Projection of Self*

The other way of explaining self-consciousness is to say that the Ego has the power of making itself its own object, of setting self before self. Following this line of thought, the Ego as subject is distinguished from the Ego as object, or the "I" from the "Me." It then becomes easy for empirical philosophers to point out that the "Me" never truly represents the "I," and that consequently we have no knowledge of the pure self. But by hypothesis the "Me" *is* the "I"; the subject is identical with the object. If we discuss self-consciousness at all, we are not justified in splitting the unitary self, and have no reason to think it strange that after our doing so it eludes us. Once name the object of self-consciousness a "Me," and self-consciousness instantly repudiates it; nay, our very complaint of its inadequacy and indirectness expresses that repudiation. Separate the object-self

from the subject-self, and it ceases to be the object we are looking for. In this respect the metaphor of reflection has an obvious advantage.

§ 3. *Self-Consciousness explained in Connection with our Consciousness of an External World*

How then does the matter stand? The proposition from which I would start is this. Self as the object of self-consciousness appears as an item in the whole universe of objects which form the *totum cognitum* of the given person. Otherwise self-consciousness lives upon its own vitals. The self shrivels into nothing by isolation. For observe that our rejection of Monism is quite consistent with the view, which indeed has been urged in the last chapter, that, *in one aspect*, the being of each individual is continuous with universal being. Plurality and unity both belong to a fundamental aspect of reality. If then the oneness of the self with its universe is fundamental, even though that oneness represents only half the truth, yet still, if it is lost sight of, the self disappears. Self-consciousness means that I recognise myself as one member among others in a world of selves. The selfhood which I recognise is not a mere point: it has its content and its external relations. The recognition of a real world is therefore involved in self-consciousness. For though it is true that the Ego, by this very act, differentiates itself from the members of its non-ego, yet it also—and just as necessarily—co-ordinates itself with them. But

notice what this implies. The Ego has taken an absolute standpoint. In the moment of self-consciousness it does not regard the universe simply as converging towards itself, as correlative merely to its own subjectivity: for if it did, then it could not *secundum idem* regard itself as a member of the universe on equal terms with other members.

The universe so regarded would exclude the subject which regards it. Clearly if the Ego is to see itself as an item *in* the universe (as well as that *for* which, in the technical sense, the universe exists) its point of view must be absolute. In other words, though every element in the whole range of my experience may be conditioned by the particular position which I, as one among others, occupy in the universe, yet the fact that I do occupy a particular position in co-ordination with others, is not a relative but an absolute truth. But what can justify this absolute standpoint? Surely it is only justified if the Ego freely recognises that its own subjectivity cannot be transcended, and therefore, for its own final purposes, *is* the absolute standpoint. How this can be we have endeavoured to discover in the previous chapters. But what concerns us now is not the Ego considered merely as subject, but the Ego considered as the object of its own consciousness. We have now the Ego viewing the universe from a standpoint which is at once absolute within its limits and at the same time finally and inevitably its own standpoint; and in this universe it sees itself, one among other Egos, an item in the vast multitude of living,

working, thinking humanity, and the vaster whole of unexplored Being around. Now if the "I" and the "Me" are by hypothesis the same, then even this object-self, subordinate, if not fortuitous, as its position appears to be, must share the absoluteness of the subject-self. I see myself as one among others in the world. But I know that this one among others, by virtue of the very fact that he knows himself as such, has a *necessary* relation to his world, in such wise that the world, even to its outermost circumference, exists, as he knows it, *for* him, and within—so to speak—his own subjectivity, no less than he exists within it.

§ 4. *Self-Knowledge the Obverse of our Knowledge of external Reality*

The outcome of all this is that there is a much closer relation between our knowledge of the outer world and our self-knowledge than we are apt to think. The one is implicit in the other. Now it is customary to regard the naïve intuitions of common sense, prior to reflection, as assuming the bare unmediated externality of its objects. The very use of the term "reflection" seems to imply this. But how can the world appear as rigidly external before the inner life is definitely recognised as such? Reflection, by revealing an inner world, reveals the outer as outer.

But then reflection, as we have seen, does not express the final meaning of self-consciousness. The assumption of an inner and outer world is only provisional. It arises

because the soul is greater than its earthly environment as such. And so Idealism is called in to fill up and hold together the fragmentariness of the external world in the categories which the mind itself supplies. In other words, *esse percipi* or *concipi*, or at least the perceivedness of an object belongs to its very essence. This position differs from that maintained in this chapter, in that it involves the attempt to transcend not merely the metaphorical distinction of inner and outer, but the distinction of subject and object. This doctrine must settle accounts with one simple consideration: when we speak of anything as perceived, as Mr G. E. Moore remarks, we mean not merely that a certain psychical act has taken place, but that the impression received thereby is *true*. In what sense can cognition constitute truth, when the idea of cognition presupposes that of truth? But we can understand the urgency of the demand that Idealism meets. The Ego overlaps its universe. The knowledge of that universe no longer appears to be (as we have seen that it properly is) the correlative of self-knowledge. The two aspects of knowledge appear as two departments. The mind can only keep in touch with itself by the process that appears to it as "reflection"; and when the chasm thus created has to be closed again, it seems right to do so by drawing, as it were, the fragmentary and partially coherent outer world into the ordered system of the inner.

But if what we have just urged be true, then such a solution is not required. Theistic philosophy supplies precisely what we want. If the knowledge of the universe

is the obverse of self-knowledge, and if, owing to the inadequacy and fragmentariness of our lower environment, the soul no longer sees itself in the shattered mirror, then it is only required that the dormant spiritual faculties should be quickened to the perception of a larger universe which transcends and contains—and the knowledge of which transforms—the world of the senses and the understanding. It is in this environment—the presence of God, and all things as seen in Him—that the soul knows itself again: for its unfathomable capacity is met by God's eternity, and its unity is restored in the convergence of His providences and the grasp of His love. Thus only, and not by the imperfect and merely intellectual process of philosophical reflection, can man really know himself.

§ 5. *The Spiritual Environment*

It has been truly objected to a certain type of philosophy, that it is vitiated at the outset by handling what are really mere abstractions from personality as if they had a certain existence in themselves. We can never reach a sound theory of personality by any mere analysis of the nature of an idea. It is easy, if you isolate, on the one hand, the idea—or even the mind—from the integral personality, and on the other the object from the Whole to which it belongs, to resolve the antithesis between them. But to do so is to build theories upon a loose use of language. It is difficult to understand how an idea can cognise or a thought think, any more than a feeling

can feel, or an act act. We must not hypostatise abstractions. We must not expect that personality, ignored at the outset, can be reinstated at the conclusion.

Truths are not relative to the thought or the mind, but to the whole personality of the thinker. Every experience in his life means not only something about the world, but something about himself, the meaning and purpose of his own life. To the higher consciousness of the spiritual man, the Whole exists for each and each for the Whole. To the unspiritual consciousness, or to our ordinary consciousness in itself, life appears fragmentary and largely incoherent. And the reason that it appears thus fragmentary within itself is that we fail to recognise that it is itself but a fragment. Becoming coherent with the larger spiritual universe it becomes internally coherent. We cannot altogether see it as such. No doubt a perfected spiritual consciousness would lead us into the arms of a true philosophy, as a perfect philosophy would triumphantly vindicate the claims of the spiritual mind. But it is enough for our purpose that the spiritual world-view does at least meet the theoretical requirements of our problem; and that it is true to the deepest tendency of actual religious experience. More we cannot hope for, so long as we are neither perfect philosophers nor perfect men of God.

§ 6. *Reality of the Individual Soul, as against both Sensationalism and Monism*

And thus, I think, the arguments of this and the preceding chapter converge. The spiritual man—that is, the man who realises the true meaning of his personality—occupies a standpoint that is at once relative and absolute. He sees God, and all in God, as related to himself: but just because related to *himself*, this knowledge is also, by implication at least, a knowledge of his own selfhood, not as a merely empirical entity, but as correlative to the universe as he knows it. Now these two members of this final correlation are of course absolute; for relativity presupposes the existence of what is related, independently of the relation. If, with the old Sensationalists, we isolate each sensation, it is easy to show that it is subjective and conveys no true knowledge of a not-self. But in so doing we are false to experience itself: we are not preserving but tampering with its immediacy. But if, on the other hand, we admit that the objects of our perception are known to us as relative to our entire concrete personality, then we presuppose that personality as real. And, as we have seen, it cannot be regarded as real unless we regard it as a member of a real universe.

Thus we can do full justice to the position of other personalities and the freedom of other wills. For though it does not appear possible, in the light of our previous arguments, to regard the activities of others, even so

far as they are contrary to the Divine will, as breaking the circle of Providence that encompasses our individual lives, yet they may be regarded none the less as conditioning its movement. Thus the religious instinct is justified in accepting calamities, even when brought about by others, as a part of God's dealings. Such a view appears strained and untenable until we definitely distinguish the fundamentally double aspect of reality discussed in the preceding chapter.

And thus the individual person is vindicated as real, if our discussion has not led us astray, both against Sensationalism and against Monism. And we have had no need to resort to the crude hypothesis of a soul-substance. The substance is not behind the manifestations, but in them. It is not for an abstract hypothetical soul that reality is here claimed, but for the concrete living person—the person of the common sense life, taken up on to the higher plane of the spiritual world.

§ 7. *Transition to the Divine Personality*

And now perhaps we are in a position to seek a somewhat clearer idea about the Divine personality itself, considered in its essential relation to our own, or, in other words, the theological doctrine of Creation. Two principles are at hand to start with. In the first place, as against both Sensationalism and any crude theory of soul-substance, we find that personality at once exists in

and through its various phases and activities, and at the same time is not broken up among them. When once the narrow barriers of the common sense life are broken down, and the whole universe of spiritual experience is thrown open, this result, as we have seen, emerges. In the second place, as against both Monism and a one-sided Pluralism, the relation between the finite person and the infinite is both one of reciprocity and one of continuity. Now I think it can be shown that, if we follow up these two propositions, they converge in a philosophical position which completely vindicates, in its essential meaning, the theological doctrine just referred to.

Let us at once claim the right to take our conception of personality as it stands, and then, when we have eliminated the element of finitude, to accept the result as some sort of formulation of what is in our minds when we think of God. If the process result in the dissolution of the very idea of personality, then we may be sure that we have misunderstood personality as such. Finitude is a negative idea, and surely can only be predicated of a positive conception, thinkable as such before the predication. For when we speak of ourselves as finite persons, we do not mean that we are persons with a superadded quality of finitude. We mean that our personality as such is finite. If therefore it is only known to us as finite, that certainly does not mean that limitation is part of its content: that would be absurd; for the limitation we are here concerned with is not circumstantial but essential. Rather, on the contrary, we must take our stand with

Descartes and Lotze, and maintain that an idea of finite personality presupposes that of infinite personality.

§ 8. *Twofold Function of Personality*

In proceeding now to consider the characteristics of personality from the point of view which here concerns us, we shall find, I think, a clear correspondence between our conclusions as to its essential nature and the actual psychological tendency of human development as we can observe it. We have seen how, in regarding ideas as within us and objects as outside, we are adopting a mode of speech which describes rather the present imperfect state of our reflective life than its innermost and final reality. Now when we turn our thoughts to the actual phenomena of personal development, moral and intellectual, we find processes tending towards that same obliteration of the dividing line between the inner and the outer world. As personality moves towards its ideal, a double process takes place, a taking in of the outer world, and, conversely, an objectivising of the inner.

§ 9. (1) *Progressive Assimilation of External Reality*

Let us consider the first. In the case of that spiritual development wherein the personality as such itself develops, we find that the world becomes more and more won over and identified with self, or, so far as this is impossible, ignored. The love which expands the self-

life in a wide embrace of sympathy and self-forgetting service, and the strength, born of faith, which, looking towards the goal, can ignore the worries of life, overcome its allurements, and transform its sorrows—this love and this strength issue in the same result, the enlarging of the self, the re-creation by the spiritual person of his world, and the expansion of his soul to embrace and include it. So the element of resistance, which is part of what we mean by externality, is minimised; partly because the forces hostile to his deepest self are overcome or transmuted in God, partly because the old selfish nature is gradually weakened, and the main watchword of life is not competition but service. So the humanity around him acquires more and more of that "warmth" or intimacy which, according to Professor James, is the very mark by which the self of the moment recognises and draws round itself those experiences which it calls its own. And further, we regard as external to us what is experienced not only by one person, but by a plurality of persons. Now the world of the developed spiritual personality is, from this point of view also, more essentially *his* world, and not another's, than is the world of the ordinary man. He knows it essentially as his world, as bearing all over it the impress of his life-mission, as the correlative, for him, of his personal being. It reflects the very essence of his individuality; and the more that is developed, the less will his world be the mere common property of a number of persons.

Thus in respect of feeling, will, and knowledge alike,

the spirit of man, awakened to the sense of its true destiny, absorbs its world into itself.

§ 10. (2) *Corresponding Objectivisation of Ideas*

Then there is the other side of the process. It is, indeed, more distinctively intellectual than moral; at least so it appears at first sight; but, moral or intellectual, it supplies what goes to make up an ideal personality. If the outward tends to inwardness as we advance towards the moral ideal, so, in the most perfect life, the inward comes to be externalised. The very meaning of thought, we are taught now, lies in its bearing on our active life: thought is an intermediate stage between the stimulus and the reaction. Now a great deal of our activity is in some way or another corrective or preservative: but our most significant and positive functions—to which the former are ancillary—are productive, or creative, whether it is the creation of an institution, or of a work of fiction, or anything whatever which may be an object of contemplation or utility to others besides ourselves. Any intentional act, or series of acts, whereby we bring into existence any *common* object is so far creative. The tendency, then, of the highly developed mind, especially under the influence of moral ideals, is to externalise its ideas, to make them part of the common world of objects. The possibility of so doing is limited by the narrowness of scope which his environment affords. In an ideal society the individual,

while receiving more from his social surroundings, would also react on them more effectually. And again, even in the matter of resistance, or determination from without, objectivity also appears. For the creative personality creates not mere plastic material, but something to which, when created, he may have to submit. The object with which he has enriched the lives of others becomes their property as well as his own, and the very excellence of his creation often consists in this: that it becomes more and more an integral element in social life, more adaptable to conditions independent of those under which it was created, more largely implicated in the thoughts and lives of other men. The production, for instance, may impose responsibilities upon the producer, may lead to developments which he cannot ignore, and so far assume the aspect of resistance to the spontaneous course of his life.

§ 11. *These Processes both productive, and merge as Creation*

We are now in a position to compare these two characteristics which become conspicuous in personality as it tends towards its ideal. Both of these, not only the second, may be called productive. The outer world affords material for the enlargement of the inner, the inner for that of the outer. And so the two processes tend to converge. The world taken in and the world given out meet in the middle and blend into one. What

then is the point at which the convergence would take place in an absolute personality? Or, to put the question in another form, can we find a principle of limitation in each wherein it may be supplemented by the other; so that if we abstract from the limitation in either case, the two processes appear as one process of which we can form a definite conception, and to which we can give a name? Such limitation is to be found in the very essence of finite social personality. The individual man is not freely productive: he must find, he must interpret, before he can create. Face to face with a community of persons as real as himself, and their creations, as real as his own—nay more, knowing this social life as a fundamental condition of his being and activity—he cannot absolutely, but only relatively, produce. He works upon materials given him. And note that the limitations under which his productive activity is exercised do not appear as inherent in the very meaning of production. Whatever is produced, is really as such something new: it is not merely an aggregate of newly combined elements. All material, as we know it empirically, has certain qualities: it is not bare matter: and it is precisely by virtue of those qualities that it becomes adaptable for use. It is material, not in spite of having qualities, but because it has qualities. The maker simply endows it with new qualities, the receptivity for which, under the proper conditions, it already possessed. It is part of the very meaning of his material that it should *be* his material. The very conception of marble, as a natural object which

is part of an entire world of men and things, includes its being such that sculptors can use it to make into statues. So the maker, while, on the one hand, he really produces something new, does not initiate, but only carries on, a productive process. Now it should appear at once that we must abandon the notion of "matter" *per se*, as forming a necessary element in the very conception of making or production. Qualified matter is necessary to all production that we know in ordinary experiences: but that only means that things are built upon a basis of other things, as mental construction proceeds upon the basis of pre-existing thoughts. Pure matter is nothing at all: it has only a metaphysical reality. To speak of it as created is the crudest of philosophical errors. The need of material for our constructions simply means this: that we are, when viewed from one side of our being, parts of a larger whole, members of one another and of God: and as we are, so is all that we produce. In the sense in which we are independent individualities, what we make is our creation; in the sense in which we are parts of one universe, our activities are phases of the great cosmic activity, and their results are but aspects and stages of the evolution of the whole.

§ 12. *Absolute, or Divine, Creation*

The need of material, then, is inseparable from the productive activities of limited persons—*qua* limited, not *qua* personal. And this brings us to the idea of

creation in the absolute sense—creation regarded as the self-expression of absolute personality. The theological doctrine that God created matter simply means—when freed from its crude form—that God creates absolutely, and not by joint production as one member among others of a social organism. The fictitious hypothesis of pure formless matter existing and created *per se*, is arrived at by a very natural process of thought. First, all construction that takes place in the world around us starts from the basis of some given material. Secondly, God is regarded, by the ordinary mind, as a quantitatively infinite man. Therefore the Divine acts are interpreted by a simple magnifying of the human to the utmost empirical horizon. The true conception of matter not readily taking hold of minds unaccustomed to abstract thought, matter is regarded simply as material, and the limitation which it implies is got over by asserting that God not only brought order into the chaos, but created the chaos itself. This conception is rendered easy by the fact that human materials (being always, like the finished articles, of a specific character) are themselves sometimes an artificial product: and, in fact, an artificer may often prepare his own material. So we arrive at a working hypothesis answering in unphilosophical theology to a more exact conception, which, when once understood, is seen to express all that the strictest orthodoxy could demand.

Now if this is so, we may maintain that if the idea of a finite personality presupposes that of an infinite Person,

so the idea of production, or construction, presupposes that of absolute creation. If human production were nothing more than a mere re-arrangement of the already existent (which indeed is unthinkable), then this could not be said: but if, as would appear, we can most truly explain it as "relative creation," then we have reached a conception in line with our general view of human and divine personality.

§ 13. *Reciprocity and Continuity between the Creator and the Created*

Now it is clear that this somewhat despised theological conception, when relieved of formal crudities, falls in exactly with what has been urged in defence of the equal rights of the One and the Many. The relation between the Creator and the created is twofold—one of continuity and one of reciprocity. Let us consider the question a little further before we leave it.

That the created object should exist as an object to the Creator—exist over against, or for, Him—follows of course from the very meaning of creation. But it applies also to all our thought. The only reason why this is not so clear with regard to ideas, or the creations of our imagination, is that they are more or less dependent on our own free will. But none the less they depend upon, and ultimately refer us to, a universe that is not ourselves, and that we know as existing antecedently to our thoughts about it. Thought is for us essentially a form,

and the highest form, of personal activity; yet on the other hand its goal is knowledge, from which the element of necessity—of conformity to objective truth—cannot be eliminated. Now it is not this element of objectivity in itself that limits our freedom; because this is involved in knowledge, which is the goal of thought; but in the fact that it is given, or provided for us. So, conversely, the perfection of our knowledge is not limited by the dependence of thought on our free will, but rather by the limitation of our data. Now absolute personality cannot be thought of as receiving data from without, and yet at the same time, it must be conceived as a centre, not of mere imagination or invention (which is meaningless by itself) but of knowledge and free living relationship to objects which exist *for* it. When we speak of the universe as consisting of the thoughts of God, let us bear in mind, first, that God's thoughts must be absolutely free; and, secondly, that the objects to which the thinking refers, and in which it issues, cannot be a mere presentation to God of the contents as such of His own mind; which—as I hope has been made clear in our discussion of reflection—is meaningless as an explanation of the ultimate facts of self-consciousness.

Freedom therefore, in absolute personality, is essentially creative. For it can neither move *in vacuo* nor work upon materials given *ab extra*. So again knowledge rests on a still sharper differentiation of object from subject than with us, because it is not qualified by the inherent one-sidedness of the finite individual's world-view.

Yet it must be borne in mind that our very conception of freedom is qualified by one essential characteristic of the real object, and that is, its action upon the subject. The element of resistance must not be ignored. Literally absolute plasticity in any object is unthinkable: we only find an approach to it in the figments of our imagination. And so that communion of man with God for which man was created must depend upon man's free will. Men must be able not only to stand aloof from God but even to thwart Him. For since it is the very innermost individuality that God has created for this communion, and which is, as we have just seen, more purely an object to Him than any object in our world can be to us, so the hostile response which is potential in that individuality must be, not superficial and incidental, but essential and eternal. The determination of our own lives, in respect of that fundamental issue which has reference to the very purpose of our existence, must, therefore, rest upon our free choice.

As to continuity, this also has been already discussed. But in the particular context of this present chapter, it may be well to see how we are led to the same conclusion as that which was reached before. It is easy to see that while the personal distinction between the finite persons and their Creator is implied in the very ideas of personality and of creation, yet the two sides of this relationship are identical in a sense more intimate than that in which the several finite persons are one with each other. For it is a commonplace of philosophy that relationship implies

a principle of oneness ; and relationship with God, resting as it does on the very foundation of our being—nay, constituting our being—must involve an equally fundamental unity. Thus we have seen that, regarding ourselves as God's instruments or co-workers, as confronting and acting upon the world in His Name and in reliance upon Him, all that we have and are, down to the deepest springs of character and action, appear as continuous with the being of God. As we have dispensed with the hypothesis of a soul-substance, which remains after we have abstracted from all sensations and activities, it follows that while, *secundum quid*, we are distinct from God, *secundum aliud* we are one with Him. And our unity with one another is mediated by the unity of each with God. For the former, or social, unity is qualified not merely, like our unity with God, by the distinction of the interacting personalities, but by the fact that each knows the rest as occupying, like himself, particular positions as members of the Divine whole, and touching his life neither round the whole of its circumference nor at the absolute centre.

§ 14. *The Question as to a Created Whole*

It seems desirable, before closing this chapter, to touch upon an important aspect of the problem of Creation, closely connected with certain ideas that are prominent in this work. We have been considering creation in its

distributive aspect; but the question arises, how are we to understand the creation of the universe as a whole?

By the universe is meant, of course, the totality of the spheres of finite being, which we are accustomed to regard as a cosmic Whole in some sense distinguishable from the Creator. Now the object of these few remarks will be to show that such a conception cannot be worked out, and that the idea of a Whole is wanted for a different and incompatible purpose. All that will be said is, I think, strictly involved in our main principles.

Is the created Whole, assuming it to exist, infinite or finite? Now we need not spend time over the "false infinite," the mere infinite of extension and number. Even if this could be made out, it would give no character of infinitude to the Whole as such, for it would only affect its lower categories. The infinite can only be thought of as an individual and organic absolute. But if so, there is no need to prove the obvious consequence that its being becomes identical with that of God.

This would be generally admitted. But what shall we say about the idea of a finite created whole? Now, if there is to be a finite whole at all, it must not present the least impenetrability to its Creator; for this would be contrary to the very idea of creation. The Whole is created with so perfect a knowledge of all its implications that the creative act must be just as immediately present in the evolution as at the commencement. For whatever deviations are caused by the sinful reactions of finite wills, these are contrary to the idea of the Whole, and therefore

we need not take account of them when we assume such a whole to exist.

§ 15. *Leibnitz's Theory of Creation*

Leibnitz, in his anxiety to secure a principle of internal continuity, and at the same time to avoid the hypothesis of a world-idea or pattern which should impose restrictions on the Creator, posited an infinity of possible worlds, out of which the Creator, whose freedom is conceived as perfect rationality, selected the best possible. It will be seen that the supposition of an infinite, as distinguished from a finite, number of such possibilities gives to each of them a real character as a whole, while yet they impose apparently no necessity on the Creator. For if any given possible world cannot be modified in any particular, because of its unitary character, still all that has to be done is to select another world differing just in that particular. The actual course of the world, therefore, does not proceed by continual external intervention, but from within; while, on the other hand, it owes nothing to any principle of necessity antecedent to its creation.

Of course it is easy to regard Leibnitz as a great thinker hampered and limited by the exigencies of his religious dogmatism: but those to whom creation is a genuine philosophical doctrine, no less than a religious, will not be unthankful for his assistance in removing its antinomies. We need not, I think, deplore as a limitation any philosopher's failure to adopt an attitude of pure critical

aloofness towards the formulated experiences of his religious community, even if a certain residuum remains to the end undigested by his reflection. Rather it may mean enlargement. The deliverance, so far forth, from subjective one-sidedness, may more than compensate for the intellectual bias. But I have referred to Leibnitz with a view to criticism. The mind cannot rest permanently in the thought of possibilities of His own action existing *for* God. Possibility implies a basis of actuality, and if God is the ground of actuality there can have been no universes potentially existing antecedently to creation. To suppose a selection of possible universes is to treat "universe" not as a singular, but as a generic term, which it assuredly is not. If it is a generic term, then it has its own connotation as such, its internal determinations common to all possible universes: in other words, the Creator is confronted not merely with abstract necessary principles, but with an empirical datum, a concrete idea, antecedent to His own mind.

God, in fact can be thought of as selecting out of a field of the actual, but not out of a field of the possible. The very idea of specific worlds, even as present ideally to the Divine knowledge, implies that their wholes are more than the aggregate of their parts. For if God had simply to choose from among an infinite possibility of monads, and could combine and arrange them as He pleased, then we should miss the explanation we want. The whole point is that the choice lay between possible *worlds*, or universes, which, even as data for God, were

organic wholes and chosen as such; and yet that the actual world, because selected out of an infinite variety, is the full expression of His freedom and power. But the hypothesis, if necessary, is also fatal. A choice of organic wholes involves that each whole, in some sense, mediates between God and its parts. A certain reduction of liberty in the direct handling of the parts necessarily follows. And if it be said that this is met by the hypothesis of an infinite number of alternatives, we must reply that such a hypothesis is therefore inconceivable. This at least must be maintained, that a variety of ideal worlds which is infinite in every direction is inconsistent with that priority of their wholes to their parts which the creation of a world as such logically implies. The finite whole, therefore, *must* limit the Creator. This does not apply to subordinate wholes, which are themselves parts; nor is there any real difficulty with regard to free individuals. The individual as such is a monad, and our problem relates to the world. Freedom is involved in the idea of a moral creation, and therefore cannot limit it.[1] But a finite sphere of being, internally differentiated, the principle of the unity of its contents, does contradict the idea of creation. The same would have to be said if the universe consisted of an aggregate of minor wholes.

We are brought round, after all, to the familiar problem. If God's creation is outside Himself, is He not limited by

1 While at the same time the idea of a moral *creation* implies that the obverse of this freedom (however contradictory at first sight) is an aspect of complete dependence, when the individual is considered as part of the created cosmos.

it? And must it not exist outside Him, if it exists *for* Him? Now finite personalities, have, as we have seen, a moment of distinctness from God: their true life is not absorption in Him, but communion with Him; but in this communion they are fundamentally units, however closely associated. Each has his own revelation; each is an ultimate centre of the Divine purpose and love. And, on the other hand, there is the moment of inclusion—strict, absolute inclusion. Therefore there is no room at all for the notion of the universe as a created entity or system, *per se*.

The vague conception of a created Whole is, I think, merely one of those provisional fictions of thought, which, while the God-consciousness is so much in abeyance, and so excluded from its true position in the intellectual and personal life, subserve and yet restrict our mental processes. Every whole in nature that we can think of —ourselves, our planet, our solar system, the *totum cognitum* of science in any given age—is as such created. But the converse is not true: created being has no whole, finite or infinite.

§ 16. *The Idea of the Whole*

I have said that the idea of a Whole is wanted for another purpose. Now if we follow up the implications of the term, we shall see how it helps us to understand—in no Pantheistic sense—the relation of God to the universe. The part, just because it is a part, is related

as such to the whole, not merely to the other parts: and it is only because (except for our consciousness of God) we know only relative and imperfect wholes, that we miss the significance of the whole-and-part relation. Without any minute discussion, I would here suggest that the perfect Whole must be thought of, on the one hand, as perfectly individual and related as such to each of its parts, and at the same time as the internal principle of their existence and cohesion. Thus the idea of a perfect Whole leads us to the idea of God. If anyone objects to such a term as applied to God, let it be dropped, by all means: let us say that the conception of totality *passes over* into that of Deity.

It is out of the question to enter here into the various difficulties which such a readjustment of our ordinary view involves. We shall most of us find it hard to settle down to such a world-view. But those who accept my general position are bound to admit that the ordinary world-view must be radically revised. We cannot give to our Mysticism the benefit of adjustment to the sphere of ordinary knowledge and of common sense, without a corresponding transformation of our vision of earthly things. And some of us will not only admit the transformation, but welcome it.

It would take us too much out of our course to trace the profound and far-reaching significance of the idea of creation for theology and religion. It is one of those ideas that philosophy tends to reject because it is inclusive as against the one-sidedness of opposing systems. But

whether it be not essential to thoroughgoing and consistent Theism I leave it to my readers to judge. In the belief that our relation to God cannot be conceived as resting on any other basis, and further that the idea itself expresses the essential function of personality as such, the suggestions in this chapter are submitted as some help, perhaps, towards the transforming of a confessional formula into an expression of rational conviction and spiritual experience.

CHAPTER VI

IMMORTALITY

§ 1. *Vital Importance of the Doctrine*

THE doctrine of Immortality has no less a claim to be considered as part of the primary content of belief than Theism itself. Were this the proper place, we should be prepared to insist on its rights as an absolutely necessary ethical postulate; but in this treatise it must suffice that the arguments which prove its truth be left to vindicate also its supreme value. A social and spiritual immortality without a God is at least a hypothesis possible for thinking men, and worth more than all belief bounded by the horizon of mortality: but a Theism without immortality is hardly worth fighting for. Communion with God—say what we will—is limited, quantitative, subject to earthly conditions; and that being so, we can only vindicate its supertemporal character by reading in it the implication of the future life. The present relative dominance of the time-order can only be purchased by absolute subordination in the long run. Communion without the promise of immortality must therefore prove not merely incomplete, but unreal.

§ 2. *The Question how to escape from the Limitations of Inductive Inference*

Now the task of formulating a philosophy of Immortality with the materials already provided in the foregoing chapters is a very plain and sure one. This further application of the principles we have arrived at is direct and inevitable. But still the question before us has peculiar features; and it certainly appears desirable not simply to take the conclusion for granted, but to try and meet certain difficulties and misgivings to which such an application is exposed.

There is one important point which confronts us on the threshold. The absolute character of religion, the right of the spiritual mind to repose in an immediate consciousness of the object of its faith, has been maintained as a ground-truth of philosophy and religion. But is it possible to claim this immediacy for the hope of immortality? We are told, with great plausibility, that this hope rests merely on inferences, and cannot possibly claim any higher position than that of strong probability. This is a vital point, and we must not evade it. If the doctrine of Immortality rests on a merely empirical foundation, then what is to become of our Theism itself, which is meaningless without the "sure and certain hope"? The chain cannot be stronger than its weakest link: no belief can rest on immediacy if one of its essential elements is radically inferential. And yet in truth it must be

admitted that to combine expectancy with immediacy is a task not to be performed off-hand. Death is an empirical fact, an event in the world-order, not experienced as yet by its investigators; and as such would seem to belong finally to the sphere of induction and analogy.

§ 3. *The* a priori *Demonstration. What it leaves to be desired*

And yet it remains that *a priori* thinkers have often endeavoured, and do still endeavour, to find a surer ground. Rational Pluralistic Idealism, like that of Dr M'Taggart or that of Professor Howison, can take up a very clearly defined position. If time is subjective, and if the individual person is a fundamental differentiation of the absolute Reality, then the ground is cut away from under our opponents' feet. But unfortunately such arguments leave something still to be desired. It is not that they are unsound—it seems to me that they are sound in the main—but they point rather to super-temporality than directly to a future life. We cannot merely ignore the aspect of death as an empirical event *in* time; and theories that cannot get beyond timelessness leave an inevitable gap between the abstract truth and the specific hope. When all is said, our belief in immortality, if it is to be really vital, must be an expectancy relating to an empirical future event, and not merely an attitude of philosophic contemplation. And in trying to pass at once from the *a priori* analysis to the empirical

hope to which it points, we are conscious of a certain μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος—an intellectual transition which does not carry an assurance of its own validity. It need hardly be pointed out that our position in this respect—as indeed will be the case throughout the chapter—exactly corresponds to that adopted in the previous chapters. In the case of immortality, as in that of God, there must be no subordination of the deepest religious and personal interests to the narrower dominance of the pure understanding. Philosophy vindicates the religious intuitions, not by supplanting them, but by shutting us up to them—by removing false assumptions and leading the emancipated personality to feel for itself the ground on which it stands.

A mere analysis of abstract principles is therefore insufficient to meet our craving for assurance. And, after all, even a rational demonstration, however sound, depends for the conviction it carries upon the thinker's confidence in the security of his own conclusions. And those who have learnt, in their own intellectual struggles, the unparalleled subtilty of first principles, and how the most solid foundation may come to feel insecure, will ask for something firmer on which to base their deepest and most passionate hopes. The reliance upon systems as systems, when they are not simply the explication of experience, can never finally bring rest—nor can anything but the faith which is itself "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

§ 4. *Insufficiency of Abstract Mysticism*

And so we are still left stranded in our search for immediacy. And again we find help indeed, but not final satisfaction, when we turn to abstract Mysticism. Here, at certain moments, we seem to touch and handle our immortality; but such spasmodic intuition, whether of that or of God, stands isolated from the main current of personal life, and dependent simply on its own vividness and intensity. While maintaining its validity as genuine knowledge, we must maintain also that its value, except at the ecstatic moments (including memory, so far as it actually reproduces them), is that of an empirical datum—that is, we may argue from the fact of its occurrence. In respect of lasting assurance, it fails because it depends upon abstraction from the empirical soul-life, in which the personality normally lives, and in which death itself enters as one event among others.

§ 5. *Statement of the Question*

We meet the question then, on our own chosen ground. Note that it resolves itself into two. Firstly, are there sure *a priori* grounds for accepting the doctrine of Immortality? Secondly, is it psychologically possible to make this hope, as a hope, a matter of direct assurance, to which all life can be made to contribute? Here again the analogy with Theism is exact. The speculative

ground of assurance is not the deepest basis, but is valid in and for the sphere of speculation. And the function that it fulfils rests not simply on its own right, but on the fact that the philosophy of the devout philosopher is itself an element in the divinely ordered whole of his life, and is therefore, in that aspect, a channel of revelation.

§ 6. *Application of Foregoing Conclusions*

As to the first point, it is well to meet the Empiricist in the most direct manner. And he may be met by the question, very pertinently raised by Bishop Butler: On which side does the burden of proof lie? Can it be shewn that the recognition either of mortality or of immortality, as a possible issue, rests on false analogies? Might it not appear, as a result of careful examination, that the very idea of mortality is logically unthinkable, and psychologically explicable as a morbid development?

Now let us turn to our philosophy, and see to what results it leads us. Of course, it is out of the question to discuss more than the salient points of our subject. The issue, stated in a few words, will simply be this: can death *per se* be thought of as annihilation; and is not immortality the necessary possession of every person who realises his true destiny in God? Great questions directly suggested by this issue must be left on one side.[1]

In our previous discussions we tried to reduce inner

[1] So also empirical considerations. Those brought to light by psychical research, quite apart from direct evidence of survival, seem peculiarly impressive.

and outer experience to correlation, pointing to the central experience of the spiritual mind in which the distinction is transcended. We tried to see how self-consciousness only finds its foothold in the cognition of a supreme Object, personally related to the finite self at its deepest depth and around its widest circumference. This Object is God, and the world as in God. Its recognition implies the recognition of self as a necessary member of an eternal order. Or, proceeding from the other side, the knowledge of God is so necessarily the knowledge of absolute, all-comprehensive Being, that the finite knower is taken up into the eternal scheme and stands within that higher world-order which he contemplates in God. This is of course a mere hasty recapitulation: there is no need to treat the matter again in detail. But here let us observe two points bearing on our present subject. In the first place, the individual, by virtue of his supermundane position, undoubtedly stands above and outside death. In this respect we are at one with the Pluralistic Idealist. If time is not in the percipient, purely and simply, neither in respect of his deepest selfhood, is he in time. And the same result appears when we study the implications of personal communion with God. This relationship, in God as in man, belongs to the sphere of feeling and sentiment, and therefore to the sphere of ends, not of processes. It is therefore rooted in eternity, however conditioned in time. It is a fact in the life of the Creator, no mere phase of His activity. And how this should afford us not merely a religious and emotional, but a

metaphysical, ground of conviction is obvious to all to whom God, not as abstract essence, but as absolute and ideal personality, is the principle of all being. Once let us admit the reality and true reciprocity of this communion, and it cannot possibly be explained in terms of the perishable order.

Such thoughts are simple enough, and there is no need to urge them upon those who have gone with us, generally, up to this point. But in the second place, our theory has another side. The Ego's recognition of itself as a member of the world-system is only compatible with its transcendental position if that system itself be reinterpreted on a higher plane. This we have just reiterated; but here note its bearing upon the doctrine of Immortality. We have been asking for a point of transition from a merely abstract conception of the absoluteness of the soul to a living hope having reference for each to the termination of his own earthly course. And we find it in that teleological view of life, previously reached, in which each event is accepted as possessing a Divine inwardness—a meaning for the deepest self of him in whose life it happens —in no way affected by the solidarity of the same event with a system of outward circumstance and physical causation. Death itself is one such event, but whereas other events may lend themselves rather to a childlike trust than to any sure and adequate interpretation, this one is directly interpretable in the light, not of particular laws within the Divine economy, but of the very fact that this economy prevails. If God—to use the current phrase

—is "immanent" in life, He is also immanent in death, which is the last event of life, inseparable from the same complex of cause and effect. For this teleology the individual is the *terminus ad quem*, a final resting-place of the Divine interest. He is no mere transition-point in a forward march of law or cosmic Providence, but a point of convergence, the centre of a closed circle of experience, which is, as such, a function of Being as a whole.

§ 7. *Implication of Expectancy in the Religious Consciousness*

If we study the nature of religious communion with the unseen, we shall see an implication of expectancy which cannot be eliminated. We are not dealing here with those ecstatic experiences in which the personality tends to lose itself, and which cannot live in an atmosphere of sound reflection and social self-consciousness. When the mind, while free from all this exuberance, is yet fixed in a Godward attitude, and rejoices in a present possession of an ineffable spiritual wealth, this experience can be shown to presuppose and rest upon hope. Various expressions that we find in St Paul, such as "All things are yours," and elsewhere in the New Testament, illustrate what is the essence of all healthy Christian Mysticism. But, historically speaking, the Christian Gospel appears to have been first eschatological, then mystical. The sense of ideal possession seems to *rest upon* that of future

possession. And however some may be inclined to regard the eschatology as simply a ladder that might have been dispensed with after the ascent, a closer examination shows that the seeming ladder is rather an indispensable basis which cannot be undermined except to the detriment, and final loss, of the superstructure.

A state of ecstasy is essentially sensuous, though on a high level. It is a resting and exultation in the immovable supertemporal reality which is above the changes and sufferings of the lower life. Its relation to the lower life is one of parallel and antithesis. There is in this Mysticism, as we have seen, no rational transition from the lower to the higher state. Self-consciousness doubles in upon itself until it perishes. This being so, the higher self, unable to utilise the materials of earthly experience and of the understanding, except as transitional stages, can only live upon the feelings which it produces within itself. And these feelings are largely determined by very mundane and physical conditions. They are at the mercy of circumstances favourable or inimical to leisure and abstraction: they are certainly dependent on temperament, and may very largely arise under the stimulus of chloroform. Their relation to the daily life must therefore be ignored within the experience itself. For the soul, however supertemporal, is also beset with liabilities from below; and the "I" which the devotee has to hold before himself continually, is not social but atomic, the "I" simply of antithesis, not of reciprocity and co-ordination. But the "I" of the sound Mystic has its content, and its

place in the world-system. Its relation to God is not the negation of its membership of that system, but the pledge that its place therein is not fortuitous but significant for eternity. It thus appears necessary that his spiritual communion must take symbolic shape and exist in the closest alliance with discursive thought. He cannot dispense with images and ideas. But at the same time it must be insisted on with the utmost emphasis that the direct contact with the Divine is the centre and essence of the experience. The delight in beauty for its own sake, if possible at all, is certainly not religious. The delight in truth as truth, the thrill of joy that accompanies a discovery, is also not religious, though it may be very closely involved in religious experience. And the God-consciousness itself precludes all possible confusion with the intellectual or imaginative processes with which it is involved. For it lifts the soul upon that plane from which all these things are seen from above. The deepest self, which lies beneath them, is opened out directly to God.

Now the images and ideas upon which feeling lives cannot have reference merely to the past, or merely to abstract first principles. They are the expression of that mystical intuition in which is given, though not formulated, the truth that all things are ours in God. This follows necessarily if we are not to be led round again to intellectualism or barren ecstasy. But though this is their meaning, they are not themselves what they express, and the feelings belonging to them yield but a slight foretaste, enjoyed, even so, only *as* a foretaste. The intuition, in

short, *must* be translated, so far as it can, into thought and imagination ; and so translated its eternity appears, not as present only—which is the error of ecstatic Mysticism —but as past, present, and future. The ideal, if never to be realised, is the unreal. And if the soul seeks to find the realisation in those very emotions that its faith engenders, it is moving in a vicious circle, and its only point of rest would be the sensuous Mysticism which we have already disallowed.

This state of consciousness, if it is to come to terms with the understanding and enter into the main current of the soul's life, must not be self-contained. Though it is central, and though it transcends the ideas and beliefs that converge towards it, yet it is continually fed by these. So we find in religious experience, when it is not ecstatic, that the feeling itself actually lives upon the assurance that it is not self-contained: the contrast between fact and feeling is the vital element in the feeling. The sense of relationship to an infinite Object preserves self-consciousness from the spurious solipsistic vitality that ends in starvation. But this discrepancy between the sense of full possession in fact and the very imperfect realisation of that possession in the feelings, would be, if final, a sheer contradiction. There is, then, a reference in the God-consciousness to the future—a reference indubitable and fundamental.

Eternity, if we interpret it, as we have done in this treatise, not through dialectic abstraction, but through spiritual experience, seems to have a necessary implication

of a past, present, and future. For if it is implicated in experience, which in one aspect is an element in temporal[1] life, there must surely be a corresponding implication of temporal—that is, future—realisation within the experience in its eternal aspect. If it is by means of a certain isolation, for the time being, that the self realises its true life in God, and if, none the less, in its deepest reality it is not isolated but social, then the isolation can only be provisional; and so, if the intuition be real at all, it must involve an anticipation of social and temporal fruition. Hope, then, as a fact of the spiritual life, rests ultimately upon that true self-consciousness which tends, amid all aberrations, to hold fast both to the Godward and to the social side of our integral personality. The development of this view would lead us into the heart of doctrinal systems, and so is quite beyond our scope. Here let it suffice to maintain that all hope, assurance, doubt, and disbelief, as regards immortality, must rest upon presuppositions antecedent to inductive reasoning.

Thus the theory of experience which we have adopted preserves the two elements which the religious consciousness imperatively demands—the solid basis of *a priori* analysis on the one hand, and on the other that living hope, that continuity with the general range of personal experiences, which the inductive method seeks to secure.

1 "Temporal" is of course not used in its popular sense, as meaning "within this life": it includes all that falls within *expectation* as distinguished from reflection.

§ 8. *The Relation of Hope to Faith*

The actual enjoyment of this grasp of immortality must depend upon the life as a whole. It must depend, fundamentally, upon our acceptance of our earthly lives (of which death is the culmination) in their Divine significance. The apprehension of the eternal issues implicit in time will reveal the time-hope implicit in eternity.

No doubt it is partly because this hope so baffles the imagination that it loses its hold upon many. We cannot, as in our ordinary hopes, construct the future out of the materials of the past, not, at least, in its sensuous character. All the material glories, if they enter at all into our vision, are symbols. It is hard sometimes to expect what we cannot envisage. And although we look for a fuller enjoyment of experiences which we enjoy in foretaste on earth, yet so long as our spiritual life is regarded as, so to speak, grafted on our earthly life, such an anticipation will rather presuppose than constitute the belief in our immortality. We shall presently dwell upon the need, in this connection, for that radically revised world-view which emerged in our previous chapters. Meanwhile those who agree with me that this hope is vital and primary will ask whether we must really wait for the enjoyment of it till we have learnt to see all life, through and through, in the transfigurement of eternity. Now here it is that faith enters. Faith does not supplement reason; it is not in antithesis to reason, but it is in

antithesis to imagination. It is an act, or series of acts, of the will, pressing ahead of the feelings. It is the resolution to rest and to build upon beliefs in the anticipation that they will, in our so doing, verify themselves in our deepest experience. Do we not sometimes find that when it is difficult really to grasp and feel the truth of some doctrine which, nevertheless, we hold to be true and vital, we are helped by the consciousness of a convergence towards it of thoughts and experiences yet imperfectly developed, and so, through the mediation of this premonition that it *will* become real to us, it does become real? It should help us greatly, if we realise that faith has its own psychological and religious character as a method of laying hold upon reality. How important it is to us in our religious life that we should not merely receive, but *win* our intuitions, needs not to be argued. And, applying this to the subject before us, we should seek to realise the *sense* of immortality partly by so bringing the *idea* of it to bear upon the events and claims of our earthly life, that the earthly life becomes unmeaning to us except as the expression of God's eternal purpose for each.

§ 9. *Hope as resting on a Basis of Immediacy*

A little way back we asked two questions: the first relating to the speculative grounds for the belief in immortality, the second relating to the psychological possibility of resting in an absolute hope. Our answer to

the first question, which required simply a brief application of conclusions previously reached, has led us directly to an answer to our second. However theoretical and abstract the purely speculative discussion may appear, it claims at least to present not merely the logical outcome of abstract ideas, but the implications of an actual and living experience of God. We stand therefore at the point where philosophy and psychology meet. If the God-consciousness is the centre and basis of knowledge, then we have secured a starting-point both for pure theory and for the life that builds its all upon a supreme hope. The logical centre must be the psychological as well. For the distinction between abstract ideas on the one hand and the mere flux of psychical life on the other, is transcended in that higher immediacy of spiritual consciousness which takes up both into itself.

And be it observed that the possibility of a hope upon which the soul can rest as it can never rest upon inferences, is not wholly dependent upon the *conclusions* reached through our *a priori* study of the God-consciousness, but is reached by a parallel application of the same method.[1] In the second chapter an attempt was made to show the unique position of the God-consciousness as contrasted with other cognitive experiences. Much the same may be said of the consciousness of an imperishable personality, correlative with God. For it is an attitude towards nature as a whole. The subject-object of this experience is not

[1] From a final point of view, of course, the immortal nature of the soul is involved in the God-consciousness. But for the moment we are treating it as relatively independent.

primarily the empirical Ego of the world-life, but that for which the Whole exists. And though the recognition of the empirical side of selfhood is necessary for transforming ecstatic contemplation into living hope, yet this recognition only takes place on the understanding that the Ego of social and daily life shall receive a mediated absoluteness—and so coalesce with the Ego *qua* eternal—through the uplifting of that life in its wholeness to the plane of Divine purpose and eternal meaning. Doubts, therefore, of immortality are analogous to doubts about the being of God. Rising from the lower level they need not permanently affect the repose of the higher; for, in challenging the assurance of the spiritual man, they stimulate that transcendental vision wherein the world of fortuity and change is seen from outside and above.

§ 10. *Significance of the Existence of a Sense of Immortality*

In the higher self-consciousness, then, as in the direct God-consciousness—if we may thus separate the two for the purposes of our discussion—we have an immediacy which is not an empty immediacy, but contains implicitly a principle of adjustment with the spheres of science, criticism, and common sense. For the bare segregated Ego of abstract Mysticism is, as such, a fiction. Whatever its use in an imperfect state of knowledge, as a working hypothesis, its interest for us lies in the fact that we cannot rest in it. If living experience never went beyond logic, this abstract contemplation would be as impotent for the

purpose of the spiritual life as would those opposite types of religion which refuse to build upon the reality of spiritual illumination. But experience is deeper than our theories, and sound theory must take the experience as it is—not dissected into dead elements, but in its living wholeness. A sense of immortality does actually exist, and is too much involved in self-consciousness to owe its origin to those abstractions that, up to a certain point, help its expression. And if indeed we are right in maintaining that the category of personality cannot be transcended, an experience that demands the permanence of the individual cannot be explained as a mere provisional hypothesis, such as gives to error all the vitality it possesses. The absence of the experience in those who are without it—especially if the absence be capable of explanation, such as we shall presently try to find—is no refutation of its validity in those who possess it.

§ 11. *Examination of the Idea of Extinction in Death*
(1) *On the Side of the Object-Ego*

But now let us approach the question from the negative side, and examine the validity of the idea of personal extinction in death. We must interrogate self-consciousness, to know at least what we mean when we make propositions about the soul. And surely this examination should make it clear that consciousness, even apart from the implication of a God-idea at its centre, is organised in some sense round a transcendent Ego-point, which

cannot be resolved into its states. And for this reason: after the most comprehensive and searching introspection, it always remains necessary to add: "These are *my* states: this is *my* analysis of them: so they appear to *me*: the very results of the analysis are relative to my character and purposes as a philosopher or psychologist; and this character is but an element, and not the deepest element, in my total personality."

The Sensationalist may be consistent with himself in maintaining that the succession of psychoses which constitute, in his eyes, the individual, will come to an end; for if he can refute philosophers of opposite schools this may naturally follow. But to allow the naïve assumptions of common sense to suggest even the possibility of mortality is to beg the question. This empirical attitude, whether speculative or unreflective, of course presupposes definite conceptions; and by its consistency in the handling of these it must be judged. Its metaphysical implications must be proved, not assumed; and in attempting to prove them we are already, whether we like it or not, on the ground of philosophy. The consideration I have just urged seems to me sufficient to condemn it, to say nothing of the whole tenor of these discussions. So far, of course, we are only landed in supertemporality: but that is sufficient for our immediate purpose of criticism and defence.

The very term "Ego" or "self" must include some sort of conception of a unitary object or phenomenon, presupposed even in the most sceptical or disintegrative

treatment of its nature. And we contradict the very meaning of the term if we keep apart the two sides of the split "Ego"; as also if, with the Sensationalist, we make the "Me," or with the Indian mystic the "I," bear the weight of the personality. Now if it is precisely that imaginative abstraction of the object-Ego from the subject-Ego that suggests the possibility of a natural death of the soul, and if that abstraction really contradicts its own meaning, then we have a right to go back upon it. Without claiming for the results of philosophical criticism in themselves a positive resting-place for mind and spirit, it must however be urged that philosophy, on the deepest plane of consciousness, is the guide of experience to its true home. In matters not central and fundamental, a rigid application of logic will often, as we all know, break up harmonies in thought and life, which yet possess a truth and a value which bare logic has not given them and cannot replace. But this dissolution of experience under logical processes can only be relative. It must disappear when we come to the centre to which logic converges and wherein experience becomes fully concrete in the integral personality of the spiritual man. Logic, on the lower plane, tells us what we *ought* to think. On the higher plane it simply tells what we *can* think. The claims of sound reasoning may disturb the naïve confidence of the lower intuitions and instincts: but that is only because they are themselves the deposit, so to speak, of a higher consciousness, which gives the law to reason itself. And so, in this case, the protest of a true dialectic against

the abstract object-Ego or "Me" is the protest, not of bloodless speculation, but, on the contrary, of a higher, more reflective, and more concrete, experience. If the old sense of a possible mortality clings round us, that in itself is no reason for making terms with it. Once granted that the way is open to a higher plane of life, in which this old misgiving will perish, then to find this assurance is a right untouched by any of the claims of pure reason. That belief in a possible mortality that belongs to imperfect self-consciousness, is simply, in the first instance, a feeling; and if it cannot maintain itself dialectically, it has no rights against the feelings of the more concrete and developed personality.

§ 12. *The Idea of Extinction in Death.* (2) *On the Side of the Subject-Ego*

We may approach the matter also from the side of the subject-Ego. That state of the mind wherein self is looked upon as involved in the flux of the time-order is not religious, however it may coexist with religious feelings. It is itself provisional and abstract, by virtue of its projection of an abstract object-self. The act of abstraction tells both ways. And therefore those states of consciousness, no less than the provisional object to which they correspond, will be superseded in the final integration of the personality that finds the Kingdom of God. The sense of mortality, therefore, has its element of truth. The subject which lives on the lower plane will,

as such, perish. For that personal contact with eternal realities wherein eternal life consists, must, by its very nature, be conscious and personal; and further it is the true ideal and final meaning of all personality. That being so, the provisional lower self, when it claims to stand alone and denies its own heritage, really is mortal. As to our ordinary common sense life, we can think of that as gathered into the higher consciousness, without any suggestion of loss or dissolution. But in so far as the lower self lives on its own basis, and loses the recognition of its solidarity with the higher, so far we cannot conceive an integration of the true person without the dissolution of the lower centres. So it is on a larger scale in religious history. The absorption of Judaism by Christianity appears, in one aspect, as a reversal, a triumph, a destruction; simply because Judaism had reached a certain false cohesion through the delusion of its own finality.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life for My sake shall keep it unto life eternal." This great principle, which has so impressed itself upon awakened consciences, is significant of the true theory of selfhood. For it appears impossible to regard the unity and coherence which a true attitude to God and the world produces, as though it were external to the innermost and secret nucleus of the soul's being. Individuality, if all that we have urged is true, is not abstract and atomic, but correlative with God as related to the individual. But this relationship, on the higher level, is personal on the side of the finite as well as on that of the Infinite; and,

on the side of the finite, is broken and limited, even when not ignored or repudiated. But if communion is at once subject to disintegration—in fact altogether dependent on our free will—and yet at the same time is the deepest principle of our being, then it follows that a breach with God must be a breach from the true selfhood, whether that selfhood be regarded as actual or ideal. The life of mere childish thoughtlessness and irresponsible ignorance, if the essential intention is sound, is, from this point of view, mainly to be regarded as an incomplete life. Its sins, however real, are not the sins of the awakened moral self-consciousness. But where communion with God is repudiated or neglected, then there results the creation of a sort of sub-self, the death of which, as such, is necessary to the realisation of the life eternal. Even in the former case, where innocence is greater, the awakening of a knowledge of the issue may reveal this lower selfhood, which now presses its claims. And therefore even in this case there may be a sense of renunciation, or dying to live, at the entrance-door to higher experience.

§ 13. *Coalescence of the Ideas of a Subject-Ego and Object-Ego*

Now all this seems to bear upon the subject of immortality, as we are endeavouring to work it out in this chapter. We are trying to analyse the view of death as we find it apart from religious feeling or belief, and where it presents itself to the mind as extinction, or possible extinction.

On the one hand we have the object-self, imagined as dying; on the other the subject-self which thus imagines, and to which the imagination conveys no impression of incoherence. The coalescence of the two, each of which means the other, removes this figment from both sides. The object-self is lifted out of its involution in the empirical flux; and the subject-self, by surrender to a higher unity, realises and so transcends that principle of death within itself, which, when the higher vision is cut off, tends to produce the fear of absolute mortality. The personality that "has passed from death unto life" triumphs over this misgiving of the imperfect self—triumphs the more effectually because it does not evade the misgiving, but experiences its true meaning.

§ 14. *Argument from the Evolutionary Significance of the Fear of Death*

But now to pass to another point. It appears that a short examination of the fear of death, considered in relation to the instinct of self-conservation, may yield some help to the establishment of our position. Let us put the query: Is the fear of death the cause or the consequence of that sense of mortality in which the human mind has sometimes acquiesced? The obvious reply seems to be that the fear is the result of the sense of mortality. Surely, it will be said, the dread of death as death, in the consciousness of those who feel it, presupposes a cleaving to existence, and therefore a sense that

its continuation is not inevitable. And surely it is this very instinct of self-conservation which is served by the fear of death, and the instinct is certainly not posterior, in human development, to the fear.

But as against this, we would point out that the instinct of self-conservation is indeed not posterior, but long anterior, to the fear of death as death; and that this fact supports a very different interpretation of the phenomena. Fear is the servant of the instinct of self-conservation, and is directed towards objects destructive to the organism. It cannot always be traced to the recollection of painful experiences under analogous circumstances, unless indeed we are allowed to postulate the inheritance of acquired fears. "Not to remain on debatable ground," says M. Ribot, "we must admit—since individual experience cannot be appealed to—that the bases of fear exist in the organism, form part of the constitution of animals and men, and help them to live by a defensive adaptation, which in most cases proves useful." [1]

The instinct of self-conservation, at any rate, is much earlier than that apprehension of the cessation of consciousness which is, of course, only possible after self-consciousness has appeared. Then notice in the second place that this apprehension is certainly not, like so many of our fears, based on painful recollection of the identical experience. Again, why, after all, should death, considered as extinction, present itself as an object of fear? It is said that fear of death is irrational, because if an-

[1] "The Psychology of the Emotions," p. 211.

nihilated we feel nothing; and this plea, though it avails nothing against instinctive emotion, points at least to the peculiarity of the phenomenon. The more clearly we intensify, in our reflection, this idea of extinction, the more it differentiates itself from all past experiences; and yet at the same time is not the revolt of the self-consciousness also intensified?

Perhaps it should be added to all this that the apprehension of mortality is absent, generally if not universally, in savages. No doubt it cannot be proved that this fact conveys to us the testimony of primary and unsophisticated intuition. It might even be suggested that primitive conceptions of the soul, as an inner man not differing in kind from the outer in which he is encased, seem rather to show that immortality, suggested by dreams, apparitions, and the like, is really something to be explained. The device of duplicating the organism would seem to presuppose an anterior assumption of mortality. On the other hand, it seems difficult to explain the general assumption of the fact of a future life without reference to the germinal self-feeling which even the ordinary unreflective life must contain. And even though it should appear that the idea of mortality lies farther back than that very early belief in a future life which we can directly trace, that idea still would not rest on a primary assumption. At any rate, the negative outlook is not the *survival* of any such assumption. It appears as the outcome of reflection, but of that negative and abstract reflection which we have discussed, and is cured by the

true concrete reflection which is the passage to a spiritual environment adequately correlated with the deepest selfhood.

But to return to our argument. If we gather up the fears and repugnances tending to self-conservation, we find a teleology behind, and antecedent to, the subject. In other words, the idea of death, as an event to be avoided, cannot be presupposed in them, until we get behind the individual organism to an eternal Mind. If only reflective humanity were in question, then we might perhaps trace these instincts back to associations terminating in the idea. But they reach far back in the history of life. And yet the consciousness of death as such is in the direct line with them, and simply brings within the range of consciousness the teleological principle which previously operated from without. It appears then that that conception of death which makes it an object of avoidance *per se* is the creation of the instinct of self-conservation, and certainly not its cause. For this instinct could not have been expected to stop short of the reflective life, and necessarily manifests itself therein as an actual motive, founded upon an idea. The idea is too closely associated with the instinct to allow us to regard it as adventitious; and it thus appears as the actual outcome of that teleological principle in which the instinct is grounded. From this it might appear that the idea receives the highest possible guarantee of its soundness. But this is not so. If the spiritual man is the explanation and meaning of the natural, and yet must—

as we know he does—come to his rights by the revision of many old assumptions which have served as working hypotheses on the lower plane, then it may well be that the idea of personal extinction through physical death serves this provisional purpose. This would be impossible if it were wholly false; but we have already tried to show that it is not wholly false, but is simply taken up and transcended in spiritual experience.

But of course this psychological problem is here raised with a more positive end in view,—with the hope of showing that the naturalistic interpretation of death is actually discredited by its association with a primitive instinct antecedent to all reflection. For if the goal of evolution does not lie beyond the perfection of earthly life: if death is the final limit for each individual: then we cannot understand how the *fear* of death can be fundamental to the sense of mortality. Yet so it is, if the latter—however dissociated in particular cases—had its origin in the fear. Naturalism, when it denies a future life, must consistently regard the fear of death as pathological and irrational. Our theory, on the other hand, looks for the extinction of the fear only when the sense of mortality shall itself be transcended. This sense of mortality cannot, surely, belong to the ground of self-consciousness—cannot be a true anticipation of our proper destiny—if the fear which tends to accompany it is not a morbid development, but its very root.

In the absence of that profound religious consciousness of the value of the soul to which the spiritual man attains,

and which conveys at once the assurance of immortality and the highest incentive to self-conservation and to social service, a reflective fear of death could hardly take any other form. When the idea of death arises, and yet that deeper spiritual conception of life, which gives the key to the meaning of its opposite, is still absent, death might be expected to present itself as a sort of positive blank, the point of convergence for all self-conserving fears, and therefore itself an object of fear. This fear may not always attach to itself any thought of annihilation, but the tendency in that direction can readily be understood. When life becomes reflective, the very resistance offered to reflection by this blank at the centre enters into reflection itself and appears as a tendency—however weakened or counteracted from opposite directions—to believe in extinction, otherwise unthinkable. "The curtain is the picture,"—or rather the picture is the curtain. The very idea of annihilation seems to be the result of an effort of the intellect to give meaning to an instinct too central to be ignored, and of which the true meaning belongs to a higher level of self-consciousness. This stultification of self-consciousness just where, by its very meaning, it might expect to possess insight, seems to suggest to it the negative solution of the mystery that baffles it.

At the point, therefore, where the multiplicity of self-conserving instincts, organised, as it were, from behind the consciousness to which they belong, are taken up into reflection, and organised round an internal centre—the

reflective fear of death,—this fear itself tends to fasten upon some sort of representation: for death, confronting the self-conscious mind, now constitutes one of a whole system of events to be averted or staved off, and these other events are all represented in the imagination and are the objects of intelligent avoidance. The reason why they should be avoided is in each case more or less understood, for the mind has formed an idea of what they are. Reason tends to supersede instinct in the control of life. But in this particular case the instinct is fundamental, and the object of its avoidance is not revealed to us in past experience. Therefore it cannot surrender itself to reason in the same way; but rather reacts upon reason, and tends to produce a spurious expectation which the higher self-consciousness dissolves.

The exact form which death presents to the imagination must, of course, be partly determined by the whole context of religious and general belief. All that is here maintained is that the fear of extinction, as thinkable if not as certain or probable, can be accounted for by the development of that very self-feeling which, when still further developed, tends to discard it. Even at the earlier stage, the sense of one's own individuality tends, in one direction, to suggest immortality, while yet, in the other, it gives the character of a positive blank, or nothingness, to the impenetrability of the death-phenomenon. Perhaps it is the mutual modification of these tendencies that produces conceptions of the other world as a half-existence in a region of gloom and shadows.

§ 15. *Connection of the Sense of Mortality with an Irreligious Attitude towards Life*

In this view of the matter the idea of annihilation through a primarily physical event clearly rests on a basis of irrationality. There is not, and cannot be, any past experience which in itself could even place it within the range of conceivable occurrences. But this result is concealed, even though more surely established, by the intimate connection of the idea with the whole world-view of the "natural man." For the defect of the God-consciousness has a two-sided consequence. On the one hand the universe assumes, in a measure, an aspect of relative self-containedness or absoluteness apart from God; and on the other hand the Ego, recognising itself as a member of this universe, yet out of touch with that Reality on which both the one and the other depend, necessarily loses that sense of its own absoluteness which belongs to it in the Kingdom of God. The universe is independently hypostatised to afford a sphere for the soul that is unmindful of its true home: but as this can be but imperfectly accomplished, the Ego itself half surrenders, as it were, its own absoluteness. Therefore it is that the Ego, in common sense life, merely co-ordinates itself with others at the expense of that sense of being-for-self which has its final basis only in communion with the Creator. Other selves, known through the superficial intercourse of unspiritual life, lose their eternal sig-

nificance ; and this failure to recognise what is highest in others reacts on self-consciousness. Known through the body, and in a sphere of existence which, however refined, is yet, from the spiritual standpoint, carnal, their being, and so its own, comes to be explained through the body. The relation of body and spirit tends to be inverted. The relative dominance of the sense-life appears as absolute. That world-life which is involved finally in self-consciousness becomes dominant : and that aspect of the empirical world wherein it is seen as existing for the individual, internal to the meaning of his transcendent self, is lost, because it depends upon the lost sense of his own inclusion in the eternal system above chance and change. And so the absence of this sense, the setting of our affections on things below, finds its nemesis in the undermining of the consciousness of immortality.

In what has just been said there may be some appearance of onesidedness, and also of treating a broad characteristic of human thought rather as if it were a phenomenon within the life-history of individuals. But of course this is not in any way intended. We are dealing simply with a tendency. This tendency is partly counteracted by other tendencies, both speculative and religious. And most certainly the individual reaps the fruits of the imperfect religious life of those before him and of his contemporaries. But these very disadvantages, when confronted by an aroused spiritual personality may be transformed into occasions of conquest. It remains that the sense of mortality can be accounted for from the

standpoint of the higher self-consciousness, while the sense of immortality cannot be invalidated from that of the lower.

At the last analysis, our ground for believing in the existence of this world is also—and first—the ground of belief in the world to come. But our philosophies are rooted in life. And in the struggles and allurements bounded by our earthly horizon, the shadows become substance and substance fades into shadow. The dream becomes real and the reality a dream. The eternal meaning disappears from earthly things, because earthly things have captured the interest and the affections that belong by right to the things eternal. And so, our life being as it is, the hope of immortality may itself become a snare; or, at least, its exclusion, as in the case of the Hebrew religion, may further a development higher than would otherwise be possible. Shut out from side-entrances its entrance there is made possible in a true context and on a true basis, when the fulness of time has come. Life and immortality are brought to light with the fuller revelation of the God who, by His very nature, "is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him." The Jewish people came to its sense of immortality by the expansion of intuitions and hopes till they burst their narrow confines and forced open a vista beyond the grave. For this spiritual faith called into life an innermost selfhood deeper than national limits, deeper than ceremonial worship, deeper, therefore, than all the changes and decay of the material world.

Christian doctrine, believed but imperfectly assimilated by the spiritual man, has through the centuries presented a barrier against the misgivings of a half-awakened selfhood. But meanwhile philosophy, when called to take its part, made a stand too much upon abstract individualism, upon a soul-substance behind the mutations of life and death; while, on the other hand, Materialism has ever drawn fresh vitality from the practical embodiment of its principles in the lives and ideals of men. But when the true inner union, the mutual reference, of religion and philosophy is recognised: when the true man in each of us discovers himself and finds his ultimate foothold in the Kingdom of God, then we have found the real secret of a sure and certain hope. The provisional severance of the Ego from its world, as against all that, in theory and practice, would hold it down to the perishing lower life, must find its issue in the reunion of both in God.

§ 16. *Assurance of Immortality based on the Religious Attitude towards Life*

Such a result is certainly not attained by the absorption of theology into philosophy. This ground need not here be gone over again. The primary reason why religious doctrine must express itself in terms of philosophy is that it may absorb philosophy. The old mediæval supremacy must be exchanged for an inward and vitalising possession, corresponding to the true place of the speculative intellect

in the personality that has found itself in God. And in this sphere mortality is left behind. The fear of it, if present at all, lingers as one of the old inhibitions of the world-life, destroyed in root and principle, severed from its logical and psychological root, and destined to perish.

To return to what has been said earlier in the chapter, the attitude of the individual towards life determines his attitude towards death. Apart from faith in God, events have always the character of mere necessity or of mere chance. On the one hand the chain of rigid sequence, on the other the irruption of new factors which rudely disturb whatever intimation of purpose relieves the hard fatalism of cause and effect—between these two narrow conceptions the true Divine teleology is lost. But when we see the world in God, they are transcended and taken up in the idea of an absolute economy, where chance becomes freedom and where mechanical necessity is replaced by the order of a perfect Mind and the stability of ideal Goodness. And these two transformed conceptions no longer struggle for common ground, but stand as coefficients in the whole world-order. And how the lower view of death becomes eliminated when this idea is rooted as an inner experience of the soul, we cannot fail to see. Regarded on the side of order, all life becomes a perfect and organic whole, and with it the individual Ego that so regards it. All its breaks and imperfections are viewed in the light of the ideal that is even now the principle of all its movement. Death, considered as an intrusion, an irrationality, has no place in such a view

of life. On the other hand, regarded on the side of Divine freedom, or the irreducible individuality and personal reference of every event in life, death also has its positive content, its spiritual meaning *within* the microcosm, which else it appears to crush from without. In its aspect therefore as a mere function of a blind system of necessity, it is as much excluded as in its aspect of irrelevance. Death cannot longer be so viewed as to make it, not only meaningless in and for the life in which it is an event, but the negation of the meaning of all previous events. It is only in the lower view of life and nature that death so presents itself. Such is any system of material interaction and sequence that allows of no free adaptation and personal reference within itself. Contingency, even though theoretically excluded, practically and subjectively remains; and it has the character, not of personal freedom, but of brute chance which comes from without the sequence, and so breaks its continuity not relatively but absolutely. And the rejection of this materialism by the intellect may be a long way from its rejection from the feelings. For in practice the crass opposition of necessity and chance may still be assumed, and the spiritual nature be crushed between the upper and the nether millstone. But when the lower antithesis is really and vitally overcome, and the whole life built upon the principle that transcends that antithesis, then the outlook is transfigured. As our life is to us, so death will be. Life considered as rooted in the universal life, self-realising through all change, cannot be thought of as

terminated by an event in that very world-order which as such has been thus transcended. Life, again, considered in respect of its distinct experiences, is one great convergence of movements towards the person of the experient, and as such excludes that empirical interpretation of the personality presupposed in the reflective fear of death.

§ 17. *Personality as related to Time and Eternity*

A few more words before concluding the chapter. Granted that our visions of eternity have a temporal implication, can we, on the side of the empirical life, find the corresponding transition-point? Is there a meaning in the trend of earthly circumstances, personal and social, that takes us to the logical frontier of time and eternity? How can any of these circumstances afford a *point d'appui* for faith, and therefore for hope? We cannot see the end from the beginning: and though we may seem to trace a providential sequence, it can never be demonstrated. However firmly we take it for granted, still, so long as the time-world as such presents no point of contact with, or transition to, the higher plane, the antithesis remains. It may be said that our own individuality is the point of transition; and so indeed it is, but not as a mere abstract principle. For individuality is not as such an element in the time-order: rather it is rooted deeper than time. The true transition-point is to be found in the Christian hope of a "harvest," a reaping of what has

been sown all life through, but never reaped: this lifts the whole time-order above contingency and death, above fate and chance alike.

In this hope the individual sees the supreme antinomy of his life transcended: being-for-self and social solidarity —in fine, the inner life and the outer—realise that complete articulation, that mutual implication, which is the goal of all his strivings and the meaning of all his conquests. May we not claim that in this realisation all that is implied when we think of the soul as living *in* the time-order, is overcome? There is no getting away from time, but it will become inward when our relation to its content is one of perfect adjustment and perfect freedom. The Kantian theory of Time is surely true of that ideal, fully realised, personality which Kant himself would not recognise. If it is not true, absolutely, of the empirical percipient, as we know him and study him under time-conditions, that is just because his perceptions, so considered, are themselves events in the time-order. Time, obviously, is internal to the individual only if we first posit him *sub specie æternitatis*. Now if self-consciousness really comes to itself only in an empty and segregated self-identity, then the true subordination of time to personality cannot be reached; because, on the one hand, you have only a bare point which is so unrelated to the time-order that even duration in time, whether finite or infinite, cannot be predicated of it, and therefore it cannot afford a clue to immortality; and, on the other hand, you have a merely empirical self, which is subordinate

to the time-order. But if we take account of a religious consciousness which raises us from a lower to a higher plane of total experience—if, at the last analysis, the Ego is at once superior to the temporal order and a member of that eternal order of which the temporal is a faint adumbration or germ—then the goal for each life and the goal of the cosmic process are equally pledged in the God-consciousness and mutually involved.

§ 18. *Symbolism in relation to Expectancy*

We leave this conclusion without further attempt at formulation. The Christian hope, social and personal, clings to some symbolic envisagement. But that should not trouble us. However we may depend upon inadequate terms, we need have no misgiving. The experience in which it is implicated remains what it is; and if there is no logical contradiction in our formulation of the doctrine, this is all that we require. And even if there is logical contradiction, this will only call for a restatement. So long as the central religious consciousness clings to this or any other belief, the logical understanding, pulling in the opposite direction, can only tear away what is seen, when once removed, to be no true element in the whole.

The hope is not compromised by its symbolic expressions. For, besides what has been said before respecting symbolism, another thought may be added. The symbol—used as such—may be regarded, in one aspect, as the soul's free creative work. And so when we are

released from our inadequate corporeal organisation into " the glorious liberty of the children of God," the new environment may come around us not only as given from without, but as the product, in one aspect, of our own veridical imagination, objectified and expanded. For the change will not be a mere passive glorification, but an emancipation. Reaching our true union with God, we shall become independent, as never before, of all hostile or disciplinary resistance. We shall realise our destiny as free creative individuals: nothing merely without us, in the sense of confinement or alien determination: nothing merely within us, in the sense of baffled cravings, unrealised dreams, illusions to cover the bareness of an environment too poor for our souls. Thus we may rise to our destiny as the creators in God of our own environment: and, if so, here is the looked-for link of continuity between the very forms of our anticipation and that of their fulfilment: the new world, even as to form and colour, even as to its social correspondences, will not crassly overwhelm us from above, but will expand and encompass us from within.

§ 19. *Conclusion*

So it may be that the most naïve expectation is essentially the truest; that speculative insight is a poor exchange for the child-heart. Yet if Christian philosophy can but guard the door of that secret sanctuary where the soul can wait and trust and hope, and gaze with

unveiled face across the shadows of the valley upon the sunlit heights where its home shall be, the task is worthy of all pains. We may be satisfied to "know in part and prophesy in part." For if we truly know the part, we know it *as* a part, and see in it the promise of the whole. This world of our physical birth is not the home of Being, but of Becoming, the incubation of the world to come. This time-order contains as such the promise of an eternal goal. Eternity lies not only above and beneath it, but beyond. And that seeming breach of continuity that closes our earthly course is but the veiling of a deeper continuity, too deep to be seen in advance under the narrow conditions of our present life. For if in very truth "we are saved by hope": if the life of faith is indeed, by its very meaning, the life of hope: then we have only to realise this, and the veil is seen as a veil, presupposing, even while it conceals, the reality behind it. So will our little world appear, no longer as a self-contained whole suspended in a vacuum of nonentity, but as the thin crust of that larger and deeper world that is the home of our spirits. And the great law of life through death will receive its supreme fulfilment, when that crust is broken through.

"O death, for all thy darkness, grand unveiler
Of lights on lights above life's shadowy place;
Just as the night that makes our small world paler
Shows us the star-sown amplitudes of space!

"O strange discovery—land that knows no bounding,
Isles far-off hailed, bright seas without a breath,
What time the white sail of the soul is rounding
The misty cape, the promontory Death!"

CHAPTER VII

REVELATION

§ 1. *Natural and Revealed Religion*

OUR subject so far has been mainly that of Natural Religion, or of religion considered apart from any specific historical creed. But we have been brought so close to the special problems of Christianity that, even on the ground of completeness, it seems desirable to show how our principles, when accepted and fully carried out, lead us to the recognition of such a revelation as Christianity offers.

There is no doubt as to the point from which we ought to proceed. Can it be shown, we must ask, that revelation is implicit even in Natural Religion itself? If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative, then, after all that has been here claimed for spiritual insight, which we have seen to be grounded in the very meaning of our personality, the task set before us in this chapter is a hopeless one. But just because we have claimed so much, we can go on with confidence. For indeed, the distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion will appear as merely relative. The one is not superimposed

upon, much less detached from, the other. And so it is hoped that the reader who has given a general assent so far may be helped to see that a belief in specific revelation is implicated in really consistent Theism.

There is a natural tendency to contrast the mystical with the evangelic view of religion: the one as dealing with the fixed realities of faith, the vision of timeless Being; and the other as finding its centre of gravity in historical occurrences. I hope to show that there is no true contrast: that Mysticism itself, when freed from self-destructive one-sidedness, issues in the recognition of a Gospel.

§ 2. *Evangelic Implication in sound Mysticism. First Link in the Argument*

To begin as far back as possible, I would point out an important consequence that seems to follow from the doctrine of experience defended in our second chapter. If indeed experience has in itself a principle of rationality and of growth, not imposed on it by thought, we must be prepared to accept the theory which sees revelation implicated in all religious knowledge, and indeed in all knowledge. For the mind is not receptive of bare incoherency. Chaotic blurs of feeling, or whatever one may prefer to call them, can only be thought of as fortuitously obtained. But, from our point of view, the rational object is presented as such from without; and therefore it is self-presented, or presented by that Reality of which

it is ultimately significant. Cognition, considered as receptive, is experiential; and therefore that of which it is receptive, not being bare casual raw material, must be regarded as possessing, or dependent upon, a centre of free initiation, not within the mind of the percipient.

But even if we do not press this, surely it is clear that God cannot be conceived as a mere passive object of knowledge. It is a familiar argument that the universe, being the object of rational comprehension, must itself be rational. But if that rationality be absolute, then the very fact that it is apprehended when, where, and in that particular form in which, it presents itself to each individual mind must be included in the rationality. Here again it has been necessary to repeat, in a different context, what has already come before us.

Knowledge of God can only be thought of as the self-revelation of God. And if it be objected that this knowledge is dependent upon outward circumstances, we have provided ourselves with an answer ready to hand. These circumstances do not break the circle of our Divine environment, however much they may condition it. At the point where they touch the innermost Godward self, God is seen to be in them. And it is when we consider that our deepest experiences are elements in a Divinely ordered life, dependent upon its circumstances, that they become sharply distinguished from that abstract contemplation in which the personalities of God and the worshipper coalesce and disappear. If in truth our knowledge of God comes to us through no transcending of our general life as

persons in a world of persons: if it comes to each of us as he is and where he is, and adapted to his own particular needs and mission, then we must think of it as given by One who Himself knows the soul that He teaches; in other words, by revelation.

If we think only of Providence, and a merely historical revelation, then there is a hopeless rift between revealed doctrine and the witness of the spirit: revelation indeed becomes unthinkable. If, on the other hand, we think only of ecstatic experiences, or of ideas of God reached by dialectic methods, then again the very idea of revelation perishes. A God who merely is found, and who does not find, a God who, at best, speaks to all together, and not to each, fails to answer to the only idea we can form of a perfect personality. For, at the point of contact between the finite and the infinite Spirit, the act of personal approach cannot be only on the finite side. The process of individuation by which the worshipper seeks out, as it were, and concentrates himself upon the vision of God, amid all that distracts and obscures his intuition, must answer to a no less concentrated personal interest—with an infinity of deeper meaning—on the side of God.

§ 3. *Second Link. Relation of Knowledge and Being*

And now we must take a step farther. That we cannot think of a bare soul-substance, or the soul regarded antecedently to all consciousness, is an elementary doctrine recognised in the biological conception of life as corre-

spondence with an environment. Therefore in the life of the spiritual man—that is, of the man who has found the true meaning of his own selfhood—there must be a central point where the distinction between knowledge and being becomes a purely abstract one, a point where the very innermost man so finds expression that the growth of this central knowledge is the growth of the very soul itself. Thus the self-revelation of God is self-communication, the imparting of His own life, the very carrying on of the creative act. To know is to be; not in the sense that being is reducible to thinking; but in the sense that personality lives in and through, not behind, its deepest consciousness. "This is life eternal—*to know.*" For in this knowledge, of course, will and feeling are inseparably involved. We here transcend that relative independence of the different sides of our personality which drives us to look for an abstract soul-substance at the back. In that knowledge of God to receive which is to will His will; in that ineffable contact with the eternal Love wherein knowledge and response are one; we find the very ground of our being, the very meaning of what we are.

It may be objected that even in respect of the spiritual knowledge of God, knowledge presupposes a knower, the vision one who sees it. Are we then entitled to regard being as parallel even with the deepest knowledge? This objection might hold if we were seeking for a rounded off system of abstract ideas. But any such system I believe to be illusory, and apparently reached only at an ultimate

sacrifice of the deeper claims of our concrete personality. The line taken in this chapter is but a carrying on, if not a reiteration, of the course of argument adopted in previous chapters. A dual aspect of reality runs down to the very ground of our experience. All we must avoid is contradiction : and none I think is here apparent. When we speak of spiritual knowledge as presupposing, like all other, the existence of the knower, we are thinking of the knowledge discursively. In respect of any particular item or occasion of knowledge, this is undoubtedly true. But when we say that to know is to be, we are thinking of the knowledge as a whole. Such a whole is certainly an abstraction ; but so is the knower before he knows likewise an abstraction. And since God is the principle of all being, the knowledge of Him is the essence of universal knowledge. We are simply brought round to our old position : in one aspect the individual is *in* his thoughts and feelings, and these again are in God : in the other aspect, he transcends them and God transcends him. So it remains—an ultimate though partial truth—that to be is to know.

§ 4. *Third Link. Revelation and Sin*

But we have not yet reached the point for which we are making. This progress in spiritual knowledge is certainly not a simple and direct unfolding of our being, with no obstacles to encounter. Its inception, in particular, has the character of a reversal, a victory, a breaking through

of deep-seated inhibitions. Now these hostile tendencies cannot, considered as such, be regarded as merely incidental, or as beneficial obstacles placed in our way, that we may become stronger in overcoming them. For this only drives the problem farther back. By their very meaning they are tendencies not relatively but absolutely hostile to the spiritual life. Their presence involves a real, not a sham, issue. And a principle of antagonism to the absolute Good is necessarily recognised by the spiritual consciousness as absolute evil.

We have come then, to this point. Firstly, revelation and the gift of spiritual life are fundamentally obverse aspects of the same Divine act. Secondly, this gift of life is essentially remedial. And so we are, I hope, prepared to consider candidly an interpretation of the connection between revelation and redemption which may compel us to revise the form of the older conception, without in the least disturbing its essential meaning. Not only, then, does redemption appear as the subject-matter of revelation, but the two processes, at the last analysis, coincide. Indeed, from one point of view, revelation is antecedent; for it is implied in life, and redemption presupposes that life has suffered injury and loss. This view, let me point out at once—and merely to point it out will be sufficient—is entirely apart from that type of theology that seeks to explain redemption in terms of revelation.

§ 5. *Fourth Link. The Social Aspect of Revelation and Redemption*

We are now brought within reach of the last link that we require for the joining of Natural with Revealed Religion. And that is the social character of revelation and of the remedial process to which it relates. We might start from the side of redemption, and establish important conclusions respecting the social aspect of sin. But in order to avoid opening wide questions more than is necessary, we will work our way from the idea of revelation. And here we take up the thread of the discussion which was broken off just before the end of the third chapter. Revelation unquestionably comes to us, on one side, in the shape of doctrines formed in the mind of the community and conveyed through the community. This follows from the simple fact that the spiritual consciousness does find sustenance in these doctrines. Now the Christian Gospel, as a matter of history, was received by the Church and the world as essentially the tidings of specific events. In what sense those events, on their purely empirical and historical side, can be said to enter into the matter of revelation, will be considered presently. Here I would simply point out that not only is the Gospel in itself an announcement of redemption, but the very giving of the Gospel, assuming its truth, is an act of redemption. In the content of a revelation we must look for an interpretation of the fact of its being given. For how is it that

all our knowledge of God does not simply unfold with the development of our understanding? Revelation, in so far as it discloses the least breach of this continuity, is a Divine intervention—the act as well as the word of God. The proclamation of salvation to the world is an integral element in the act of saving the world. Now it seems clear that general truths about God, considered apart from the record of any specific redemptive process, cannot be consistently thought of as forming the subject-matter of specific revelation. For whatever, in the way of general truth, the mind of men could receive, it could also discover: and if indeed such truth has given him just what his deepest nature requires, it was only to be expected that he should have discovered it. We cannot think of a Divine intervention as occurring merely to hasten, help on, or control, a natural process. For the natural process itself is the working of God. The only thing that can conceivably thwart the direct unfolding of God's purpose is sin; and we cannot think of that as met otherwise than by a specific act of redemption and revelation. But in that case not only is revelation itself redemption, but it must contain, as the Christian Gospel does contain, an announcement of redemption as its subject-matter. For no mere truths about the fixed order of eternal reality can solve the problem of sin; since the entrance of sin is itself, by hypothesis, a disturbance of the fixed order, and therefore an event which must be counteracted by a Divine remedial event. Thus the Gospel must not be, and is not, a mere republication of Natural Religion. It is an an-

nouncement of events, or of one supreme event, of which it is itself a necessary phase.

§ 6. *Doctrine*

The message of reconciliation must take the form of definite doctrine, because the assurance of union with God must, of course, be intellectual and not merely emotional. Since it is sin as such that divides us from God, the message must explain the reconciliation on a principle of atonement for sin as such. It must show us how the problem is overcome and the barrier surmounted, not simply within our own subjective life-histories, but antecedently. The receiving of the repentant sinner is not finally explained by his repentance, because it points back behind the repentance to that Divine initiative, in the inner and outer life, which made the repentance possible. We need, then, an objective doctrine of redemption; and that doctrine must relate, not to mere immovable first principles, but to an event. If Natural Religion deals with what is, specific revelation must tell us of what has happened. It can have no message that has not reconciliation for its basis. For—to sum up—it cannot be merely individual, because it relates to a situation presupposed in the earliest spiritual conflicts of the individual; and it cannot be a mere philosophy, because it explains, and in part constitutes, a remedial and reconstructive intervention.

§ 7. *Development of the Conclusion just reached*

It has been somewhat difficult to set forth the view here adopted under the limitations which I have imposed upon myself. But without entering on a discussion of the social, or racial, aspect of sin, perhaps I may be allowed to express in passing my conviction that when we analyse the idea of sin we are compelled to trace it back, *in one aspect*, behind the emergence of self-consciousness and free-will in the given individual.

Perhaps it may still be asked : Can the need of a specific revelation really be made clear from the standpoint of Natural Religion ? I think this question has been practically answered already. Natural Religion discloses within itself, and to its own view, a hopeless rift. How is it that God reveals Himself to the soul, and yet that that revelation is partial and constantly thwarted ? To look for further light is an inherent tendency of Natural Religion itself. We cannot be content with broken manifestations—external or internal—of the character and power of God. For they are nothing if they are not manifestations of personality, and yet their fragmentariness and incoherence are contradictory of the very idea of personality. And, broken as these glimpses are, they hint to us not of a person like ourselves, but of One from whom arise the springs of life around and within us, and whose perfection is presupposed in all imperfections ; and thus the very subject-matter of the revelation so given

seems to be discrepant with the imperfection of its conveyance, until the elusive glimpse is merged into the fulness of a Gospel. It may be said that the personalities among which we live, even those of the highest type, often appear to us in this broken way, just because we see so little and understand so little. Yes, but we must be careful how we argue from the finite to the infinite. If indeed the individual soul occupies that position in the Whole that has been here claimed for it, all its glimpses of God must be regarded as His deliberate self-revelation to that individual, and therefore cannot be accepted as marred by essential and final contradiction, even relatively to the percipient. And the direction in which we must look for the resolution of its contradictions must be that of the circumstances under which it finds its way from God to us: just as we can only understand the actions of a fellow-creature through some sort of knowledge of the circumstances by which they are conditioned. And this brings us round again to revelation as the record of redemptive acts.

Perhaps I may be allowed to quote (with slight alteration) a passage from a former essay, in which I endeavoured to give expression to the general view which is here more elaborated.[1] "Personality is expressed through relationships, and relationships are determined by circumstances. So the personality of God becomes real to us, not as an abstract idea, but through a relationship which He has established with us under those circumstances of

[1] "The Church and her Testimony," an essay contributed to "The Common Hope," edited by the Rev. Rosslyn Bruce, M.A.

need and estrangement which are included in the idea of sin. Personal knowledge and affection cannot exist without a set of conditions which, otherwise separative, have become a medium for the expression of our will and feeling towards one another. Such is our knowledge of God in Christ. It has come to us through His own self-expression in a supreme Sacrifice related to our supreme need."

Indeed the very principle of specific revelation is already recognised on the ground of Natural Religion. For even on this ground the knowledge of God does not simply unfold from within but often enters suddenly from without, and in the face of opposing influences. The real point of transition to what we call Revealed Religion is to be found in the social side of personality and of the religious truths on which it feeds.

Now all this leads to a conception of revelation which, without explaining it away in the very least, brings it into the closest connection with the necessities of thought. If revelation is implicit in Natural Religion, then Revealed and Natural Religion are, from one point of view, continuous. We may say that the one unfolds from within and the other is given from without, but I hope it has been successfully established already that the distinction between "inner" and "outer," though it has been provisionally used in this chapter, is not a final distinction. We must not be surprised if revealed truths, when once revealed, receive such witness from the innermost consciousness that some are inclined to ask: Why should

revelation be regarded as external at all? The reply has already been given. The witness of conscience to the Gospel is a witness only; it is a witness to facts that are by hypothesis events, not to abstract truths. And the externality of the revelation to the individual is a part of its very substance and meaning; for it is an announcement of salvation to the world—salvation which by its very nature must be wrought before the eyes of the world. But if revelation is thus external to the individual, how shall it appear as implicated in his own experience? I reply that Christian experience is itself the creation of that Gospel to which it bears witness. The externality of revelation is the obverse, not the negation, not even the limitation, of its inwardness.

Of course this does not mean that each separate Christian doctrine ought, in and by itself, to be accepted as self-evident. It means that all doctrines, considered as true, are logically implicated in the God-consciousness. It is merely because reason does not, for most of us, make clear how the more peripheral doctrines are implied in, and required by, the more central, that the former fail to share fully the experiential value of the latter. The true work of reason is so to clarify and systematise the various items of our belief that the God-consciousness automatically draws them within its own circle.

§ 8. *Mysticism and History*

We are now brought round again to the discussions in the second chapter, and there is no need to cover that ground again. But we must not leave this subject without facing the question, already mooted: How shall the historical character of the Christian Gospel be reconciled with uncompromising Mysticism? How is it possible to rest the verification of historical events, in so absolute a manner, upon the witness of spiritual intuition? Must we not leave a fair field to historical criticism? In order to answer this, let us ask ourselves what we really mean by the facts of redemption. They are primarily facts about God: and it is as such that they rest upon the witness of conscience. Everything else about them is, properly speaking, incidental. The historical circumstances in which the Divine action is set, form the *tertium quid* between the eternal aspect of the events—still events even when so regarded—and our ordinary knowledge, especially historical knowledge, of the visible world in which we live. We accept the history because the circumstances it relates exactly correspond to the idea of redemption which our spiritual intuition has accepted. The New Testament and the Church are existing facts, and the story of redemption accounts for those facts. It may be objected that this distinction between the facts *sub specie æternitatis* and the historical occurrences is theoretical and remote. So it may be, but it serves our present

purpose. For the vindication of conscience as a witness to Divine remedial intervention, it is enough that we should recognise this theoretical distinction. That the distinction should not be apparent in the actual beliefs of men is to the advantage of the history, not to the discredit of the intuition. Those in whom the intuition is strong have for that reason no need to fear free criticism, since, in the first place, it follows from what has just been said, that even the history is not an exclusive preserve for the ordinary methods of historical criticism; and, in the second place, religious faith, even in its acceptance of specific Divine action on behalf of the world, rests ultimately on a foundation which criticism cannot touch. On the other hand, those who are without the intuition, must almost inevitably, as it would seem, be disqualified for unbiassed investigation.

The difficulty arises from the tendency to identify the eternal with the static and immovable—the tendency to set the world of movement and change in unmediated antithesis to the sphere of fixed and eternal reality. Christian theology need not attempt to come to terms with such philosophy: for the attempt is hopeless. Christianity is committed to a dynamic eternity, an eternity which comprises acts, movements, crises, changes. Or, in other words, the philosophic eternity is only a working conception which ceases to be valid as soon as we escape from the barriers of intellectualism and boldly view reality from the standpoint of spiritual experience. History, then, as such, has its supertemporal side. And it

follows that we make a fatal mistake when we assume that belief in redemption must depend ultimately on historical evidence. For indeed, even at its best, this evidence belongs to the sphere of the contingent ; it is empirical in the ordinary sense of the word, and cannot satisfy the demands of faith. If it be admitted that conscience can at least interpret the events which historical criticism establishes, we may further ask : cannot conscience ratify that which it can interpret ? If we deny its power to ratify, can we consistently defend its power to interpret ? Conscience cannot play a secondary part. If it be not supreme, it tends to become isolated and to perish *in vacuo*.

This view of historical revelation should save us from any timid distrust of the scientific method—that distrust which is such a weakness in theology. If we take our stand upon a Gospel of Redemption, we are committed to an antithesis between the natural and the supernatural (if I may use these terms without being misunderstood) which nothing can get over. We may therefore fearlessly allow psychology, or anything else, to take us as far as it will go. We may have to shift the line between the natural and the supernatural, but it can never be lost or blurred. Redemption and the world which is redeemed, intervention and the order into which the Redeemer intervenes, God as Saviour and the world as saved—here we have an irreducible reciprocity. And since the redemptive act occurs on the historic plane and is conditioned by the normal earthly environment, we may well

expect that it will in turn react upon that environment. We shall not try and artificially isolate a minimum of supernormal occurrences, and discredit every alleged event which, on the side of the world-life, suggests the presence of higher forces. The stone that falls into the stream sends forth transverse ripples some distance from the actual area of displacement.

§ 9. *The Specific Content of the Christian Gospel*
(1) *The Person of Christ*

As, in dealing with Theism, it was found easy to pass from the grounds of belief to the philosophic aspect of its subject-matter, so it might seem natural to pass from the theory of revelation to the actual content of the Christian Gospel, and to show that its implication in Theism is no less sure than is the merging of the idea of Natural Religion into that of Revelation. But this subject is so large that only a broad view of it can here be expected. It follows from what has gone before that Christianity must so take up Natural Religion into itself that the two shall form an absolutely indivisible and integral whole. I think if I were to select a passage from the New Testament expressing the nature of this transition, I could hardly find it more significantly set forth than in the saying of Christ: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." For those who have accepted the argument of this treatise so far, it should inevitably follow that Theism is wholly

taken up into Christology, nay is an implicit Christology. If all knowledge of God is really, at bottom, experiential, and if the experience of God is not merely ecstatic but conveyed through the world and the human life which is His self-expression, then—even to go no further—we are prepared to receive the witness of the Church to Christ. But we can go much further. If the knowledge of God is nothing else than the direct apprehension of the absolute and ideal Person in His relation to ourselves, and if indeed, as I have urged, this personality reveals itself necessarily in a redemptive act, then we have the essence of Christianity at once. For there is no question of *what* redemptive act. Though indeed (if, just at the close of our argument, I may be pardoned for being dogmatic rather than argumentative) I would say that the Gospel history of redemption exactly embodies the very idea of what redemption must be, if it is to answer to just those needs that our God-consciousness reveals, and to resolve the antinomies of Natural Religion. I think that almost all who have gone with me so far will agree with this. But the real object of spiritual belief as such is the fact of redemption, not its historical circumstances, however practically inseparable from the fact. And if so, such facts as the birth of Christ during the virginity of His mother, the special mode of His death, the separation of His Ascension from the Resurrection, and such like, belong to the form and economy of revelation, not to its essential content. They are significant, indeed, not of a mere religious philosophy, but of distinct phases of an actual

Divine act or process. But the point is that we properly reach the belief in the Scriptural account of redemption by seeing how it answers precisely to the only possible idea of redemption, not by working upwards from the historic facts. The primary question thus becomes, not "Is Christ God?" but "Is God Christ?" These facts have undoubtedly produced the idea in the Christian consciousness. But once the idea is formed, it becomes the very ground of all consciousness of God, the very meaning of all His dealings with us, and with the world, even before Christ came. In history and in individual life, it takes up all pre-Christian Theism into itself. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

That our Christian communion with God is primarily communion with the risen Christ really follows from all we have said. For it was in and through His person that the redemptive work, with all its transcendent revelation of perfect personality, took place. If the spiritual intuition of the Church has set its seal to His deity, He in turn has stimulated and enriched that intuition, and placed Himself at its heart and focus. We do not see God through any mere medium: this is the crude way of thinking that is fostered by the term "immanence." All phenomena for the God-consciousness express, within their limits, the immediate presence of God. And it is clear that even this relative distinction between His own being and the medium in which He manifests Himself disappears at the central point of self-communication. In the Incarnation "immanence" and "transcendence" meet—

as they must meet, if they are to mean anything as an interpretation of the undivided being of God. Our seeing of God in Christ clothes for us the Person of Christ with all the Divine attributes—not in any ethical or metaphorical sense, but by a final necessity of thought—and raises it above time and space. For deity cannot be a mere accident, a mere halo of glory round the perfect Man. Christ has drawn to Himself that God-consciousness, which by its very meaning is the consciousness of an eternal, ever-present, ever-responsive Object.

But here it may be asked: Wherein lies the significance of the Resurrection as a simple historical event, set in the context of ordinary history? In this: that in and through that event the knowledge, and therefore the presence, of the living Christ has reached us. That knowledge, like all knowledge of God, is the self-revelation of its Object. The very fact of our possessing it is a declaration that He lives, and the revelation itself is of life won through death. It is His own testimony, spoken within us, not a mere inference from vague feelings. The very witness of the God-consciousness itself, the voice that it hears when awakened by the message of redemption, is nothing less than this: "I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore."

§ 10. (2) *Divine Self-Sacrifice*

There is another aspect of this subject which is too important to pass over altogether. It is plain that for

all who believe that a Divine act of self-sacrifice and self-surrender is the heart and centre of Christianity, there is a clue at hand to solve the most pressing problem of Mysticism and personality. How may the surrender of the very innermost personal being to God be reconciled with the maintenance and development of our selfhood? How shall we avoid passing—as Mystics so easily pass—from an ethical and spiritual communion to a sense of quasi-physical union with the Divine essence? This has been answered already, but something now may be added to the answer. The human act is only the response to a Divine act. The Christian God-consciousness springs from and embraces that supreme expression of the personality and the character of God. And the Christian self-consciousness is primarily the consciousness of a redeemed selfhood. That is the proper root from which all subsequent experience grows. God is known in terms of redemption, and all spiritual gain that comes to us through life enters by that door. Here we have not merely the Divine interest in the individual worshipper, not merely the relevance for God of all the circumstances of his early life, but a literal self-giving, a concentrated personal approach, to which the self-consecration of the worshipper is the corresponding factor. And as the worshipper's act is the full and consummate expression of his own personality and free will, such as he is; so the archetypal self-sacrifice expresses the archetypal personality. Here is no one-sided approach, but reciprocity on the deepest ground both of the finite and of the infinite Being. Here

we see the Divine consciousness and will and love in their indissoluble unity; God, not as diffused Spirit, but as *actus purus*, being and action in one. As we do not transcend, but realise, our own personality, in rising to God, so neither do we pass beyond His personality to some super-personal essence. And it is only on the Christian ground that this relationship can ultimately stand. For the human act of self-disposal requires its Divine correlative. And this correlative is not merely His receiving what we surrender, but His having surrendered what we receive. If, as we have seen, all revelation is God's self-communication, this does not exclude, but on the contrary points to, a central act, wherein He literally and actually gives *Himself*.

All this implies that the supreme Divine act, expressed in history and having for its object man as man, is none the less personal and concentrated, and epitomised in the experience of the individual. And that, certainly, will be no objection to the argument, if our general position be accepted: to say nothing of all that is involved in the received doctrine of the attributes of God. The supreme Gift of God is neither divided nor mediated. His central and innermost personality meets the central and innermost man.

Surely when we take to heart the deep-lying meaning and necessity, for Theism, of a redemptional theology, not only shall we be guarded against Pantheism, but we shall be freer to accept the truth for which it gropes, because we shall better locate and grasp its real antithesis to Theism.

§ 11. *Christianity and other Religions*

We have no need to explain away religious experiences which are outside Christianity and yet bear a resemblance in certain aspects even to the most sacred elements of Christian life. For the event which created the Christian Church need not be said to have exhausted the expression of that supreme redemptive act which we have seen to be above our time-sphere, an event in God's eternity. But if we allow to these experiences a value not absorbed in the final and unitary revelation of God in Christ, if we refuse to recognise any absolute religion, then we are trifling with what is deepest and most intense in all religions. Those who belong to non-Christian faiths should not over-value the superficial approval of some students of Comparative Religion, or of anyone who, accepting all religions in general, rejects every religion in particular.

Particularity, indeed, or the knowledge of God not merely as the principle of all individuality, the Individual of individuals—for thus He is still a mere philosophic idea—but in the concrete experience of the worshipper, is in the long run a necessity of religion. Christianity alone secures to us this communion with infinite and ideal personality; for its doctrine of the Divine initiative gives more than an object of intellectual search or of ecstatic and occasional experience. The gods of the theanthropic religions are a witness to that desperate craving of our nature that sacrifices deity in its very search for com-

munion with deity. Christianity solved a religious deadlock. The gods of mythology, if accessible, were mean or criminal: the God of Plotinus was an immaculate vanishing-point. It is no disparagement to that great and lofty thinker to recall, when we think even of him, the words of the Apostle: "The world by wisdom knew not God." It knew a little *about* Him, but that little only made it harder to believe that He could be known. The intervention of Homeric deities in the merely circumstantial crises of human life, and the philosopher's God, of whose very nature it appeared to be that He did not and could not intervene even in the most central—between the horns of this dilemma the religion of antiquity fell. On the one hand, there was the merely thought-out God, not known in any experience answering to the free movement of His own self-expression; on the other, the deities that were undeified by the very manner and circumstances of their interposition. God as such can only be known at that point in each of our being whence all our thought and all our activities radiate: and so the possibility of a true doctrine of God could only keep in line with the development of self-knowledge. Yet that self-knowledge, in the mind of the philosopher, was hopelessly limited by its very isolation from the general range of living experience. It was necessary that the reflective insight of the Greek should unite with the unreflective intuition of the Jew.

But the confluence of these two streams of subjective life had necessarily an objective correlative. The con-

ciliation of naïve experience with reflection could only take place in that experience which embraces implicitly the whole rational field: in that reflection which, by the pressure of its own antinomies, throws us once more into the arms of a living experience. And if there was to be this new experience, it could not come from the ordinary data of our world-life; for as such it would have been nothing but fresh material, and could only lend itself to new inferences. The new experience must be the experience of a new event. Here is the point where the distinction of inner and outer life is transcended: revelation becomes redemption.

And the event was necessarily a social event. For though the individual, by isolating his religious life, gains thereby a certain experience of God, yet at the same time that experience is sapped by his abstraction from the concrete social whole to which he and his religion belong. This isolation *seems* necessary to the highest attainment, and yet beyond a certain point it stultifies its own gains. The solution of the problem is to be found in the Christian Gospel and the Christian Church.

The unsympathetic attitude of many writers towards Christianity is often partly concealed, from themselves and others, by the use of the word "dogma" to express the object of their contempt or aversion. It is recognised that a great historical religion like Christianity, which has undoubtedly proved beneficial to mankind in many respects, and which affords expression for a large range of spiritual instinct, cannot be merely brushed aside as an

absurdity. But the distinction drawn between its form and its substance is often merely subjective, and not historical. Its teaching is admitted to shadow forth certain philosophical and ethical ideas which are in the mind of its critic, and all the rest is relegated to the dust-heap. But to contrast "dogma," or alleged mythology, on the one hand, with certain abstract ideas or moral principles on the other, is to raise a false issue. Christianity must be judged primarily by that idea of redemption which it embodies. Dogmas claim our acceptance as the intersubjective formulation of an experience of God as Saviour. The first question is: Can we accept as valid that central idea which is explicated in the scheme of doctrine? The second is: how far may we accept each particular doctrine as contributing to a true formulation of that idea? It is hoped that this treatise may afford help to some of its readers towards an answer to the first question, and even, less directly, to the second.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

§ 1. *Religion and Science. Objective Relation*

It may not, perhaps, be out of place to suggest, in a few words, one or two points of contact between the general position here maintained and the special demands and problems of the age in which we live.

In the inductive studies of our day, two main features of a very opposite character appear in great prominence: one is the tendency to specialisation, the other the interconnection of the different branches of science. The same increase of knowledge which renders a thorough and first-hand understanding of several subjects less and less easy to obtain, reveals also a profound and subtle continuity between them; so that to know each thoroughly may call for some acquaintance with several others.

We are not here concerned, directly, with any practical difficulties to which this situation may give rise, but rather with the view of truth to which it points. In the first place, it makes prominent the relative and pragmatic character of scientific truth, as against any delusions respecting the absoluteness of its ground-principles.

Mediæval thought grounded nature on principles of a hypostatic and spiritual, even theological, character. The Cartesian philosophy, setting the seal of speculation to the empirical revival, gave to nature a certain independent position as a mechanism, over against the spiritual principle. The doctrine of evolution, in the last century, introduced so vast a unification of nature, on purely inductive grounds, that we have been brought, inevitably, to a standpoint antithetical to the mediæval. Spirit is explained through nature, the higher categories through the lower: religion, if not regarded as a pure evolutionary product, is a mere epiphenomenon. The very breadth of the new synthesis, by making plausible its claim to universality, has narrowed the outlook of the scientific mind.

Meanwhile, Rational Idealism, proceeding from the opposite side of the Cartesian dualism, has failed to find a transition-point between first principles and the concrete life of man. No more abstract, really, than Naturalism, it has seemed so, because, after all, men can live upon the naturalistic plane, but cannot live upon the idealistic. What we need is a philosophy that, instead of subsuming religion under evolution, shall subsume evolution under religion—a higher, deeper, and broader doctrine of experience, which shall take up the world-life as a whole into the life of a higher world, and thus reveal the poverty and abstractness of the lower empiricism.

But to return. This essentially pragmatic character of scientific truth brings us, at the last analysis, to the individual. For the needs of the investigator are ulti-

mately human needs, and the social mission of the individual, *sub specie æternitatis*, belongs to the very meaning of his life. His character as an investigator is simply a middle term between his individuality and the social whole to which by his very constitution be belongs. If all these facts and laws that he studies are not related directly—as far as we can trace them—to his innermost spiritual personality, yet they are related directly to his sphere of life and purpose as a scientist; and this sphere, as a sphere, is related directly to his innermost self.

In the end, therefore, it should appear to the thoughtful and earnest student that nature is many-faceted, and not in any one aspect crassly objective. For however thoroughly he may sink his personal equation and merge his subjectivity in that of the universal scientific mind, yet his very membership of that larger whole is but an element in the yet larger individual life which belongs to all citizens of the Kingdom of God. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of by his philosophy."

If scientific truth is abstract and relative, and yet if science is science, and not a mere hypostatisation of our sensations, then this relativity of its laws should disclose the larger Whole to which both nature and the student belong. Thus the unity of nature will not be broken up; for individuals, and their minds, are in one final aspect one with another — though, ultimately, only in and through God. And science will be placed, if in a less proud, yet in a more secure, position. For there cannot

possibly be anything within science itself which secures it against the philosophic scepticism which it vainly wishes to ignore.

The scientific man who knows little of religion is not competent to criticise it from the standpoint of science, any more than the schoolmen were justified in deciding physical questions on grounds of theology. But of course the study of nature may either cause or remove inhibitions to religious insight and belief. The man to whom theology as such means some sort of arbitrary dogma as contrasted with verified laws, and Christianity appears to rest on mere "miracle" in a sense that begs the whole question of a higher order, rejects, not the real object of Christian faith, but the figment of warped intelligence and spiritual atrophy. The mere evolutionist is the victim of arrested apperception.

On the other hand, when it is understood that Christianity yields a synthesis vaster and more penetrating than that of Naturalism, and offers itself for experiment and verification upon the deepest grounds of consciousness, then science itself should provide a stepping-stone to the knowledge of God. For if scientific conclusions have not that direct bearing upon religion that is claimed for them by many both on the positive and on the negative side, yet those same instincts and powers of the human mind, which produce results so immense within the spheres of research, are but a function of the larger and basal apperception of the spiritual man; however dissociated in individuals.

§ 2. *Religion and Science. Subjective Relation*

And so, conversely, if the individual accepts the eternal significance and Divine commission of his whole concrete life, not merely as common but as specific, then scientific study will itself subserve the purposes of his spiritual self. It is within the individual that religious and other knowledge form an ultimate and organic whole. And this unification is not merely subjective, for the subject himself is an eternal entity and a member of both the spheres which are correlated in and for himself. So of course it is not meant that the unification is purely private and incommunicable; only that the *final* synthesis, the actual point of convergence, lies hidden at the core of personality, and that the ultimate unity of the personalities must be found, not on the temporal plane, but in God. In Him alone is truth truly and finally objective, and yet the personal possession, in measure, of each distinct subjectivity.

The greater part of the facts and principles in which the devout investigator is immersed may have for him no direct connection with those higher realities for which his life as a whole is lived. But the fact of his immersion in these facts is an element in the eternal meaning of his life, a fact belonging to his heavenly citizenship. And we may expect that in the life to come the lower consciousness will pour the wealth of its content into the higher.

The most loyal devotion to the study of relative truths is something different from that surrender of the self as such which is required for the knowledge of God. The deepest motives for their conscientious study lie outside their own sphere. No science can claim for itself the many-sided personal self-consecration that religion claims. Where the personal equation must be eliminated, the person as such should be recognised, for that very reason, as standing outside and over against his subject-matter. For the personal equation in each of us is not, from the deepest point of view, local, temporal, and contingent, but essential and eternal. It must find its place in that central and Divine Truth by which it is not only admitted but required.

Whatever line of study a man takes up, he should undertake it under the deepest sense of personal responsibility — choose it not merely because it is good, but because, for him, it is the best. He may make mistakes; but the essential point is this: that, before his faculties are consecrated to particular tasks, they should be consecrated to the choice of the tasks, so that his life-work may fall to him not by chance or impulse, but as an infinitely sacred commission. The attractiveness of any particular pursuit, the importunity of any particular impulse, may in itself be a strong factor in determining the choice; but still it must *be* a choice—a supreme expression of consecrated judgment and spiritual freedom. The commission is none the less sacred because he may have erred in judgment: none the less sacred because, at

the best, the duties are self-imposed: for the law which the central Ego lays down for the lower centres is the very law of God Himself. Even an act committed under the influence of wrong moral ideas is a fulfilment of duty in those who hold it to be right. We are responsible simply for obeying our moral sense, and for that correcting and fostering of the moral sense which is included in that responsibility. And if it is a supreme duty to make the best of our lives, from the highest standpoint, then the plans we honestly make become as binding as if they were openly decreed by Heaven. And surely the spirit in which we devote ourselves to our studies will determine our reaction to the ideas which they suggest. If the scientist in any of us subserves the concrete spiritual person, then, on the object-side, the physical world will be seen in a corresponding subordination to the Kingdom of God. If, on the other hand, we merely suppress the personal equation, instead of reserving it for that higher knowledge that requires it, then we shall tend to suppress that supreme Reality of which the physical world is but a function. If we find our *deepest* inspiration and ultimate motives in the attraction of our subject-matter—if we make the study of it the fundamental interest of our lives, then the content of this subject-matter, the empirical universe, will itself tend to appear objectively self-sufficient, all-embracing, and final. The exaltation to the highest place of anything in us which is lower than the central Godward self finds its counterpart in the exaltation of the created world at the expense of the Creator.

§ 3. *Religion and Society*

Turning for a moment to the social question, we are confronted by the rise of the collectivist ideal. Now whatever truth it may contain as against the old individualism, we must note that schemes of reconstruction on communistic lines are the counterpart of Naturalism —a low, narrow, and premature synthesis. The very ethical basis of such ideas lies in the rights and interests of each, as against a merely organic conception of society: but at the same time the bloodless social organism is exalted to a position of claim not only over the bare service, but over the whole-hearted loyalty of its members. Those sub-groups—the family above all—which are the nursery of the deepest and warmest altruistic impulses, are to be wholly or partially dissolved. That hitherto indispensable social function, self-interest, so important even to moral development, both for the self-control that it requires and for the fusion of its methods and ideals with those of social service, is to be reduced to a minimum, not from within the moral nature of men, but from without. Whatever may be the ultimate social achievements effected through the awakening of conscience and of sympathy, individualism will never allow itself to be corrected by external suppression.

For it is through the living person as such, standing as he does between the higher and the lower world, that the forces of the one can flow into the other. But if so, he

must be true to the logic of his position. He must not treat the eternal sphere as a mere background. If thus faithful to his supreme ideal, the lesser ideals will be in some measure attained. For if in truth it is through the refining and elevating of human intercourse, through the cultivation of sympathy and service between man and man, rather than by the direct pursuit of distant civic ideals, that the kingdom of righteousness and peace is to make progress, then we must look, for social renewal, to the sources of personal regeneration. And this will be reached by the acceptance of the heavenly citizenship, by the transfiguration of this world in the light of the world to come. Humanitarianism can provide us with tasks, but not with a fresh spring of primary motive. Love must be assimilated in a real union with its personal hypostasis and source. And He who is its source must be also its primary object, and man must be loved and served from His standpoint and in respect of His final purpose for their redemption.

For the forces of eternity will not for ever consent to serve merely the ideals of time. Character formed in the Kingdom of Heaven cannot *live* in the narrow sphere of the Kingdom of Earth; and we shall serve in this lower sphere the more effectually if our life is hid with Christ in God. The lever which is to raise the world must rest upon an eternal fulcrum. That false and shallow view of the spiritual sphere as a cloudland, and of those who live in its contemplation as dreamers, must be allowed no place. The best mystics of the Middle Ages were un-

selfish benefactors of their kind. And it is to Mysticism that the twentieth century must look. We must increase our spiritual capital, or we shall become bankrupt.

In short, as society consists of persons, the forces that will raise it are the personal forces, the qualities that are called forth in personal relationships. And the sphere of basal personality cannot be an impersonal social whole, conceived through abstraction from its members. And so, since personality is unthinkable apart from its social side, it must find a larger and deeper social life, a life among men and women regarded from the standpoint of eternity, and in the world regarded as fraught with eternal issues. It can only realise and discharge its office for the empirical society by surrender to the claims of the larger citizenship. If it is to save the world, it must find its centre of gravity in the world to come.

It is only in relation to persons—that is, individuals—that the personality of God can be understood. But just because He can see each individual in all the completeness of his social meaning, it follows that the race is not atomic in His eyes. Yet neither is it a defined and hypostatic whole. We cannot think of the infinite moral Personality as mediated, except relatively and economically, in His union with persons as such—not even by any supposed racial whole, and obviously not by any temporary and subordinate whole. So it seems right to say that, in God's eyes, a man is not an item of humanity, but humanity a character of the man. It is only our ignorance that needs to hypostatise the abstract to make it embrace and unite

the concrete: God's omniscience sees the abstract in the concrete. But the concrete individual so regarded is the individual *sub specie æternitatis*, whose ultimate and deepest needs lie beneath the phenomenal sphere.

Immortality, just because it rests on the deepest basis of individual life, will be essentially social. The isolation of the personality is only an intermediate stage between a provisional and imperfect social life and that true reciprocity of each with the whole which is consummated in the life to come. In the Christian Gospel immortality means bodily, or organic, resurrection; and what is that but the restitution, not of isolated units of humanity, but of each individual with his social and material correspondences? What is it but social regeneration? I think that the feebleness and vagueness of this hope is the outcome of a dull and impoverished faith. It is so much easier at first to trust God as the centre and Controller of all spiritual forces, and of all social progress, in this life, and to look to the future life as a mere background, than really to grasp the organic continuity of this world with the world to come.

It is not until the promise of social renewal is seen implicated in the innermost vision of God, that the evil tendency to play off social against spiritual aspirations will be overcome.

And the Kingdom of Heaven will never prove itself the supreme dynamic, until we have accepted it as the supreme end. It is a force just because it is a goal. Neither merely future nor merely immanent in the empirical

world-forces, but an all-embracing sphere destined to come to its own, and even now the foundation and the bond of things seen and temporal, its primary method is not self-infusion but self-assertion; its primary aim, not the reform of communities, but the winning of individuals. As its workings are beneath this world, so its ideals are above and its promises reach beyond. And therefore we must not hesitate to proclaim that, amid all the complex needs of our fellow creatures, the supreme blessing that we can bring to their doors is the Gospel of Immortality. We shall not apologise for our "other-worldliness"; for it is other-worldliness that has transformed, and will transform, this world.

§ 4. *Religion and the Evolution of Thought*

As to our directly religious needs, it is hardly necessary to dwell upon this subject, since it has been before our minds throughout this treatise. It does seem to me that the discovery of our deepest selfhood affords the only true reconciliation between the flux of human thought and the need of the individual for a foothold beneath his feet and an abiding object for his grasp. We can neither ignore the flux nor fling ourselves on its mercy; and all compromise is impossible in matters that concern our deepest lives. But if these changing theories are relative, not only to the changing needs of each generation, but to unchanging needs revealed in our higher self-consciousness —relative to a central experience which is at once an

enjoyment, a law, and a hope, at the heart of every personality that has realised its eternal meaning—then we have found the solution: we can be patient and strong. God, Redemption, Immortality—the movement of these great ideas is not onward, but inward; not by way of change, but by way of the progressive disclosure of an identical meaning. They are not internal to the intellectual situation in which we find ourselves, for that very situation can be viewed *ab extra* from the standpoint they provide. Christianity is no product of evolution; for evolution itself has its significance within the synthesis of Christian Theism.

The very conditions of our spiritual selfhood, the discipline whereby it grows, demand that we should know in part and prophesy in part. And the starlight will never be lost except in the sunlight. It is only when that which is perfect is come that that which is in part shall be done away. We must not expect a steady unfolding of spiritual knowledge in this world of ours. We must not wonder if new truths obscure old truths which can as ill be spared. For the whole evolution takes place on a little planet at the mercy of cosmic forces. It is enough if these truths feed the eternal personalities whose social bond is the life of the world to come. In them lies the pledge that the most transient gleams of light have never been received in vain.

"Thy prayer was 'Light—more light—while Time shall last!'
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,
But not the shadows which that light would cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light."

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